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GROUNDS & OCCASIONS OF THE Canada CONTEMPT OF THE CLERGY AND RELIGION *Enquired* into.

In a LETTER *written to* R. L.

LONDON,
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PREPARATORY
DEVOTION

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

I Can very eaſily phanſie, that many upon the very firſt ſight of the Title, will preſently imagine, that the Author does either want the great Tithes, lying under the preſſure of ſome pitiful Vicaridge; or that he is much out of humour, and diſſatisfied with the preſent condition of Affairs; or laſtly, that he writes to no purpoſe at all, there having been an abundance of unprofitable Adviſers in this kind. As to my being under ſome low

Church Dispensation, you may know, I write not out of a pinching necessity, or out of any rising Design; you may please to believe, that although I have a most solemn reverence for the Clergy in general, and especially for that of England; *yet, for my own part, I must confess to you, I am not of that Holy Employment: and have as little thoughts of being* Dean *or* Bishop, *as they that think so, have hopes of being all* Lord Keepers.

Nor less mistaken will they be, that shall judge me in the least discontented, or any ways disposed to disturb the peace of the present settled Church: For in good truth, I have neither lost Kingdom, nor Bishops Lands; that should incline me to a surly and quarrelsom complaining: As many be, who would have been glad enough to see His Majesty *restored, and would have endured Bishops daintily well, had they lost no Money by their coming in. I am not*

I'le assure you, any of these occasional Writers, that missing preferment in the Universities, can presently write you their new ways of Education; or being a little tormented with an ill-chosen Wife, set forth the Doctrine of Divorce to be truly Evangelical: The cause of these few sheets was honest and innocent, and as free from all passion, as any design.

As for the last thing which I supposed objected, viz. That this Book is altogether needless, there having been an infinite number of Church and Clergy-Menders, that have made many tedious and unsuccessful offers: I must needs confess, that it were very unreasonable for me to expect a better reward: Only thus much I think with Modesty may be said; that I cannot, at present, call to mind any thing that is propounded, but what is very hopeful, and easily accomplished. For indeed, should I go about to tell you, that a Child can

never

never prove a profitable Instructor of the people, unless born when the Sun is in Aries; *or brought up in a School that stands full South; that he can never be able to govern a Parish, unless he can ride the great Horse; or that he can never go through the great Work of the Ministery, unless, for three hundred years backward, it can be proved that none of his Family ever had* Cough, Ague, *or gray Hair; then I should very patiently endure, to be reckoned amongst the vainest, that ever made attempt. But believe me, Reader, I am not, as you will easily see, any contriver of an incorruptible and pure Crystalline Church; or any expecter of a Reign of nothing but* Saints and Worthies; *But only an honest and hearty wisher, that the best of our Clergy might forever continue as they are; rich, and learned; and that the rest might be very useful, and well esteemed of in their Profession.*

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THE GROUNDS & OCCASIONS OF THE CONTEMPT OF THE CLERGY & RELIGION Enquired into.

THat short Discourse, which we lately had concerning the Clergy, continues so fresh in your mind, that I perceive by your last, you are more than a little troubled to observe that disesteem that lies upon several of those holy Men. Your good wishes for the Church, I know, are very strong and

unfeigned, and your hopes of the World receiving much more advantage, and better advice, from some of the Clergy, than usually it is found by Experience to do, are neither needless nor impossible. And as I have always been a devout admirer, as well as strict observer of your actions, so I have constantly taken a great delight to concur with you in your very thoughts. Whereupon it is, Sir, that I have spent some few hours upon that which was the occasion of your last Letter, and the Subject of our late discourse. And before, Sir, I enter upon telling you what are my apprehensions, I must most heartily profess, that for my own part, I did never think, since at all I understood the excellency and perfection of a Church, but that Ours now lately Restored, as formerly Established, does far outgo, as to all Christian ends and purposes, either the pomp and bravery of *Rome* her self, or the best of *Free Spiritual States*. But if so be it be allowable, where we have so undoubtedly learned and honourable a Clergy, to suppose that some of that sacred Profession, might possibly have attain'd to a greater degree of esteem and usefulness to the World, than I hope what has

has thus long hindred so great and desirable a Blessing to this Nation, may be modestly ghess'd at, either without giving any wilful offence to the present Church; or any great trouble, dear Sir, to your self: And if I be not very much mistaken, whatever has heretofore, or does at present lessen the value of our Clergy, or render it in any degree less serviceable to the World than might be reasonably hoped, may be easily referred to two very plain things, the *Ignorance* of some, and the *Poverty* of others of the Clergy.

And first, as to the *Ignorance* of some of our Clergy; if we would make a search to purpose, we must go as deep as the very beginnings of Education, and, doubtless, may lay a great part of our misfortunes to the old fashion'd Methods and Discipline of Schooling it self: Upon the well ordering of which, although much of the improvement of our Clergy cannot be denyed mainly to depend; yet by reason this is so well known to your self, as also, that there has been many of undoubted Learning and Experience, that have set out their several Models for this purpose, I shall therefore only mention such loss of time and abuse of youth, as is most re-

remarkable and mischievous; and as could not be conveniently omitted in a discourse of this nature, though never so short.

And first of all, it were certainly worth the considering, whether it be unavoidably necessary to keep Lads to sixteen or seventeen years of Age, in pure slavery to a few *Latin* and *Greek* words? Or whether it may not be more convenient, especially if we call to mind their natural inclinations to ease and idleness, and how hardly they are perswaded of the excellency of the liberal Arts and Sciences, any further than the smart of the last piece of Discipline is fresh in their memories, whether I say it be not more proper and beneficial, to mix with those unpleasant tasks and drudgeries, something that in probability might not only take much better with them, but might also be much easier obtained?

As suppose, some part of time was allotted them for the reading of some innocent *English* Authors; where they need not go every line so unwillingly to a tormenting Dictionary, and whereby they might come in a short time to apprehend common sense, and to begin to judge what is true: For you shal have Lads that are arch knaves at the Nominative

rominative Case, and that have a notable quick Eye at spying out the Verb, who for want of reading such common and familiar books, shall understand no more of what is very plain and easie, than a well educated Dog or Horse. Or suppose, they were taught (as they might much easier be, than what is commonly offered to them) the principles of *Arithmetick*, *Geometry*, and such alluring parts of Learning: As these things undoubtedly would be much more useful, so much more delightful to them; than to be tormented with a tedious story how *Phaeton* broke his Neck; or how many Nuts and Apples *Tityrus* had for his Supper: For most certainly Youths, if handsomly dealt with, are much inclinable to Emulation, and to a very useful esteem of Glory, and more especially, if it be the reward of Knowledge; and therefore if such things were carefully and discreetly propounded to them, wherein they might not only earnestly contend amongst themselves, but might also see how far they outskill the rest of the World: A Lad hereby would think himself high and mighty, and would certainly take great delight in contemning the next unlearned Mortal he meets withal. But if instead

instead hereof, you diet him with nothing but with Rules and Exceptions, with tiresome Repetitions of *Amo's* and *Tupto's*, setting a day also apart to recite *verbatim* all the burdensom task of the foregoing week (which I am confident is usually as dreadful as an old Parliament Fast) we must needs believe, that such a one, thus managed will scarce think to prove immortal by such performances, and accomplishments as these. You know very well, Sir, that Lads in the general, have but a kind of ugly and odd conception of Learning, and look upon it as such a starving thing, and unnecessary perfection, (especially as it is usually dispens'd out unto them) that Nine-pins or Span-counter are judged much more heavenly employments: And therefore what pleasure, do we think, can such a one take, in being bound to get against breakfast two or three hundred Rumblers out of *Homer*, in commendation of *Achilles's* Toes, or the *Grecians* Boots? Or to have measured out unto him, very early in the morning, fifteen or twenty well laid on Lashes, for letting a syllable slip too soon, or hanging too long upon it? Doubtless, instant execution upon such grand miscarriages as these, will eternally engage him

him to a most admirable opinion of the *Master*.

Lads, certainly, ought to be won by all possible Arts and Devices, and though many have invented fine *Pictures* and *Games*, to cheat them into the undertaking of unreasonable burdens, yet this by no means is such a lasting temptation, as the propounding of that, which in it self is pleasant and alluring: For we shall find very many, though of no excelling quickness, will soon perceive the design of the Landskip, and so looking through the vail, will then begin to take as little delight in those pretty contrivances, as in getting by heart three or four leaves of angry'd non-sense.

Neither seems the stratagem of Money to be so prevailing and catching, as a right down offering of such Books which are ingenious and convenient; there being but very few so intolerably careful of their Bellies, as to look upon the hopes of a Cake, or a few Apples, to be a sufficient recompense for cracking their Pates with a heap of independent words.

I am not sensible, that I have said any thing in disparagement of those two famous Tongues, the *Greek* and *Latin*, there being

ing much reason to value them beyond others, because the best of humane Learning has been delivered unto us in those languages. But he that worships them, purely out of honour to *Rome* and *Athens*, having little or no respect to the usefulness and excellency of the Books themselves (as many do) it is a sign he has a great esteem and reverence of Antiquity, but I think him by no means comparable for happiness to him who catches Frogs, or hunts Butterflies.

That some Languages therefore ought to be studied, is in a manner absolutely necessary, unless all were brought to one (which would be the happiest thing that the World could wish for,) but whether the beginning of them, might not be more insensibly instilled, and more advantagiously obtained, by reading philosophical, as well as other ingenious Authors, than *Junius Dingwarum*'s, crabbed Poems and cross-grain'd Prose, as it has been heretofore by others, so it ought to be a fresh considered by all well-wishers either to the Clergy or Learning.

I know where it is the fashion of some Schools, to prescribe to a Lad for his Even-

ing

ing refreshment, out of *Commonius*, all the terms of Art belonging to *Anatomy*, *Mathematicks*, or some such piece of Learning. Now, is it not a very likely thing that a Lad should take most absolute delight in conquering such a pleasant Task, where, perhaps, he has two or three hundred words to keep in mind, with a very small proportion of sense thereunto belonging, whereas the use and full meaning of all those difficult terms, would have been most insensibly obteined, by leisurely reading in particular this, or the other Science? Is it not also likely to be very savoury, and of comfortable use, to one, that can scarce distinguish between Virtue and Vice, to be tasked with high and moral Poems? For example; It is usually said, by those that are intimately acquainted with him, that *Homer*'s *Illiads* and *Odysses* contain mystically all the *Moral Law* for certain, if not a great part of the *Gospel* (I suppose much after that rate that *Rablais* said his *Garagantua* contained all the Ten Commandements) but perceivable only to those that have a Poetical discerning Spirit, with which gift, I suppose, few at School are so early qualified. Those admirable Verses, Sir, of yours, both *English* and

others,

others, which you have sometimes favoured me with a sight of, will not suffer me to be so sottish, as to slight or undervalue so great and noble an Accomplishment. But the committing of such high, and brave sens'd Poems to a School-boy, whose main business is to search out cunningly the Antecedent and the Relative, to lie at catch for a spruce Phrase, a Proverb, or a quaint and pithy sentence, is not onely to very little purpose, but that having gargl'd only those elegant Books at School, this serves them instead of reading them afterward, and does in a manner prevent their being further look't into: So that all the improvement, whatsoever it be, that may be reap'd out of the best and choicest Poets, is for the most part utterly lost, in that a time is usually chosen of reading them, when discretion is much wanting to gain thence any true advantage. Thus that admirable and highly useful Morality *Tully's Offices*, because it is a Book commonly construed at School, is generally afterwards, so contemn'd by *Academicks*, that it is a long hours work to convince them, that is worthy of being look'd into again, because they reckon it as a Book read over at School, and no question notably digested.

If

If therefore the ill methods of Schooling does not onely occasion a great loss of time there, but also does beget in Lads a very odd opinion and apprehension of Learning, and much dispose them to be idle, when got a little free from the usual severities; and that the hopes of more or less improvement in the Universities, very much depend hereupon, it is without all doubt, the great concernment of all that wish well to the Church, that such care and regard be had to the management of Schools, that the Clergy be not so much obstructed in their first attempts and preparations to Learning.

I cannot, Sir, possibly be so ignorant, as not to consider, that what has been now offer'd upon this argument, has not onely been largely insisted on by others, but also refers not particularly to the Clergy (whose welfare and esteem I seem at present in a special manner solicitous about) but in general to all learned Professions, and therefore might reasonably have been omitted, which certainly I had done, had I not call'd to mind, that of those many, that propound to themselves Learning for a Profession, there is scarce one of ten, but that his lot

lot, choice, or necessity, determines him to the study of Divinity.

Thus, Sir, I have given you my thoughts concerning the orders and customs of common Schools: A consideration in my apprehension not slightly to be weighed, being that to me seems hereupon very much to depend the Learning and Wisdom of the Clergy, and the Prosperity of the Church.

The next unhappiness, that seems to have hindred some of our Clergy from ariving to that degree of understanding, that becomes such an holy Office, whereby their company and discourses might be much more than they commonly are valued and desired, is, the inconsiderate sending of all kind of Lads to the Universities, let their parts be never so low and pitiful, the instructions they have lain under never so mean and contemptible, and the Purses of their Friends never so short to maintain them there. If they have but the commendation of some lamentable and pitiful Construing-Master, it passes for sufficient evidence, that they will prove persons very eminent in the Church. That is to say, if a Lad has but a lusty and well-bearing Memory (this being the usual and almost only thing where-

by

by they judge of their abilities) if he can sing over very tunably three or four stanza's of *Lilly*'s Poetry, be very quick and ready to tell what's *Latin* for all the Instruments belonging to his Fathers Shop; if presently, upon the first scanning, he knows a *spondy* from a *dactyl*, and can fit a few of those same without any sense to his fingers ends; if lastly, he can say perfectly by heart his Academick Catechism, in pure and passing *Latin*, *i. e. What is his Name? Where went he to School? and What Author is he best and chiefly skill'd in?* A forward Boy, cries the School-Master, a very pregnant Child! ten thousand pities, but he should be a Scholar: He proves a brave Clergy-man, I'll warrant you. Away to the Universtity he must needs go; there for a little *Logick*, a little *Ethicks*, and God knows a very little of every thing else, and the next time you meet him it is in the Pulpit.

Neither ought the mischief which arises from small Country-Schools to pass unconsidered, the little mighty governours whereof, having, for the most part, not suck'd in above six or seven months full of Universtity Air, must yet by all means suppose themselves

selves so notably furnished with all sorts of Instructions, and are so ambitious of the glory of being counted able to send forth now and then to *Oxford* or *Cambridge*, from the little House by the Church-yard's side, one of their ill educated Disciples, that to such as these oft-times is committed the guidance and instruction of a whole Parish: whose parts and improvements duely considered, will scarce render them fit Governours of a small Grammar-castle. Not that it is necessary to believe, that there never was a learned or useful Person in the Church, but such whose education had been at *Westminster* or St. *Paul's*: But, whereas most of the small Schools, being by their first Founders design'd only for the advantage of poor Parish-Children, and also that the stipend is usually so small and discouraging, that very few, who can do much more than teach to write and read, will accept of such Preferment, for these to pretend to rig out their small ones for an University Life, proves oft-times a very great inconvenience and dammage to the Church.

And as many such dismal things are sent forth thus with very small tackling, so not a few are predestinated thither by their

Friends,

Friends, from the foresight of a good Benefice. If there be rich Pasture, profitable Customs, and that *Henry* the Eighth has taken out no Tolls, the Holy Land is a very good Land, and affords abundance of Milk and Honey: Far be it from their Consciences the considering whether the Land is likely to be serviceable to the Church, or to make wiser and better any of his Parishioners.

All this may seem at first sight to be easily avoided by a strict examination at the Universities, and so returning by the next Carrier all that was sent up not fit for their purpose. But because many of their Relations are oftimes persons of an inferior Condition, and who either by imprudent Counsellours, or else out of a tickling concern of their Son's being, forsooth, an University Scholar, have purposely omitted all other opportunities of a livelihood, to return such, would seem a very sharp and severe disappointment. Possibly it might be much better, if Parents themselves, or their Friends, would be much more wary of determining their Children to the Trade of Learning. And if some of undoubted knowledge and judgment, would offer their advice, and speak their hopes of a Lad

about

about thirteen or fourteen years of Age; (which I'll assure you, Sir, may be done without conjuring:) and never omit to enquire, whether his Relations are able and willing to maintain him seven years at the University, or see some certain way of being continued there so long, by the help of Friends, or others; as also upon no such conditions, as shall in likelihood deprive him of the greatest part of his Studies.

For it is a common fashion of a great many, to complement, and invite inferiour Peoples Children to the University, and there pretend to make such an all-bountiful provision for them, as they shall not fail of coming to a very eminent degree of Learning: But when they come there, they shall save a Servants Wages. They took therefore heretofore a very good method to prevent Sizars over-heating their Brains; Bed-making, Chamber-sweeping, and Water-fetching, were doubtless great preservatives against too much vain Philosophy. Now certainly such pretended favours and kindnesses as these, are the most right down discourtesies in the World. For it is ten times more happy, both for a Lad and the Church, to be a Corn-cutter, or Tooth-drawer, to

make

make or mend Shoes, or to be of any inferiour Profession, than to be invited to, and promised the Conveniencies of a learned Education, and to have his Name only stand airing upon the College Tables, and his chief business shall be to buy Eggs and Butter.

Neither ought Lads parts, before they be determined to the University be only considered, and likelihood of being disappointed in their Studies, but also Abilities or hopes of being maintain'd until they be Masters of Arts. For whereas two hundred, for the most part, yearly Commence, scarce the fifth part of these continue after their taking the first degree. As for the rest, having exactly learned, *Quid est Logica?* and *Quot sunt Virtutes Morales?* down they go by the first Carrier, upon the top of the Pack, into the West or North, or elsewhere, according as their Estates lye, with *Burgesnicius*, *Eustachius*, and such great helps of Divinity, and then for Propagation of the Gospel. By that time they can say the *Predicaments* and *Creed*, they have their Choice of Preaching, or Starving. Now, what a Champion for Truth is such a thing likely to me? What an huge blaze he makes in the Church? What

a Raiser of Doctrines, what a Confounder of Heresies, what an able Interpreter of hard Places, what a Resolver of Cases of Conscience, and what a prudent Guide must he needs be to all his Parish?

You may possibly think, Sir, that this so early preaching might be easily avoided, by with-holding Holy Orders, the Church having very prudently constituted in Her Canons, that none under Twenty three Years of Age (which is the usual Age after seven Years being at the University) should be admitted that great Employment.

This indeed might seem to do some service, were it carefully observed, and were there not a thing to be got, called a Dispensation, which will presently make you as old as you please.

But if you will, Sir, we'll suppose that Orders were strictly denyed to all, unless qualifyed according to Canon. I cannot foresee any other Remedy, but that most of those University Youngsters must fall to the Parish, and become a Town Charge, until they be of Spiritual Age. For *Philosophy* is a very idle thing, when one is cold. And a small System of *Divinity* (though it

be

be [illegible] sufficient when one is hungry. What then shall we do with them, and where shall we dispose of them until they come to a holy Capacity? May we venture them into the Desk to read Service? That cannot be, because not capable: Besides, the tempting Pulpit usually stands too near. Or, shall we trust them in some good Gentlemens Houses, there to perform holy Things? Withal my heart, so that they may not be called down from their Studies to say Grace to every Health: That they may have a little better Wages than the *Cook* or *Butler*: As also that there be a *Groom* in the House, besides the *Chaplain*: For sometimes to the Ten pounds a year, they crowd the looking after a couple of Geldings: And that he may not be sent from Table, picking his Teeth, and sighing with his Hat under his Arm, whilst the *Knight* and *my Lady* eat up the Tarts and Chickens. It may be also convenient, if he were suffered to speak now and then in the Parlour, besides at Grace and Prayer-time: And that my Cosen *Abram* and he sit not too near one another at Meals: Nor be presented together to the little Vicarage. All this, Sir, must be thought of: For,

in good earnest, a Person, at all thoughtfull of himself and Conscience, had much better chuse to live with nothing but Beans and Peafe-Porrage, (so that he may have the command of his thoughts and time) than to have his second and third Courses, and to obey the unreasonable humours of some Families.

And, as some think, two or three years continuance in the University, is time sufficient for being very great Instruments in the Church; so others we have so moderate, as to count that a solemn admission, and a formal paying of College-Detriments without the trouble of Philosophical Discourses, Disputations, and the like, are Vertues that will influence as far as *Newcastle*, and improve, though at never such a distance.

So strangely possessed are People in general, with the easiness and small Preparations that are requisite to the Undertaking of the Ministry, that, whereas in other Professions they plainly see what considerable time is spent, before they have any hopes of arriving to skill enough to practice, with any confidence, what they have design'd, yet to preach to ordinary People, and

govern

govern a Country-Parish, is usually made such an easie performance, that any body counts himself fit for the Employment. We find very few so unreasonably confident of their parts as to profess either *Law*, or *Physick*, without either a considerable continuance in some of the *Inns of Court*, or an industrious search in Hearbs, Anatomy, Chymistry, and the like; unless it be only to make a Bond, or give a Clyster. But, as for the knack of Preaching, as they call it, that is such a very easie attainment, that he is counted dull to purpose that is not able at a very small warning, to fasten upon any Text of Scripture, and so tear and tumble it till the Glass be out. Many, I know very well, are forced to discontinue, having neither stock of their own, nor Friends to maintain them in the University; but whereas a Man's profession and Employment in this World, is very much in his own, or in the Choice of such who are most nearly concerned for him; he therefore that foresees that he is not likely to have the advantage of a continued Education, he had much better commit himself to an approved Cobler or Tinker, wherein he may be duly respected according to

his Office and condition of Life, than to be only a disesteemed *Pettifogger*, or *Empirick* in Divinity.

By this time, Sir, I hope you begin to consider what a great disadvantage it has been to the Church and Religion, the meer venturous and inconsiderate determining of Youths to the Profession of Learning.

There is still one thing, by very few at all minded, that ought also not to be overlooked, and that is, a good Constitution and Health of Body. And therefore discreet and wise Physicians ought also to be consulted, before an absolute Resolve be made to live the life of the Learned. For he that has strength enough to buy and bargain, may be of a very unfit habit of body to sit still so much, as in general is requisite to a competent degree of Learning: For although reading and thinking breaks neither Legs nor Arms, yet certainly there is nothing that flags the Spirits, disorders the Blood, and enfeebles the whole Body of Man, as intense Studies. As for him that rives Blocks, or carries Packs, there is no great Exercise of Parts, no Anxiety of Mind, no great Intellectual Pensiveness; Let him but wipe his Forehead, and he is perfectly

perfectly recovered. But he that has many Languages to remember, the Nature almost of the whole World to consult, many Histories, Fathers, and Councils to search into, if the Fabrick of his Body be not strong and healthful, you will soon find him as thin as a piece of *Aristophanes*, and look as piercing as a School subtlety. This, Sir, could not be conveniently omitted, not onely, because many are very carelesse in this point, and at a venture determine their young Relations to Learning, but because, for the most part, if amongst many, there be but one of all the Family that is weake and sickly, that is languishing and consumptive, this of all the rest, as counted not fit for any course Employment, shall be pick'd out as a choice Vessel for the Church: Whereas most evidently, he is much more able to dig daily in the Mines, than to sit cross-legg'd musing upon his Book.

I am very sensible, how obvious it might be here to hint, that, this so curious and severe inquiry, would much hinder the Practice, and abate the flourishing of the Universities. As also, there has been several, and are still many living Creatures in

the World, who whilst young, were of a very slow and meek apprehension, have yet afterward cheared up into a great briskness, and became Masters of much Reason: And others there have been, who, although forced to a short continuance in the University, and that oft-times interrupted by unavoidable services, have yet by singular care and industry, proved very famous in their Generation. And lastly, some also of very feeble and crasie Constitutions in their Childhood, have out-studied their distempers, and have become very healthful and serviceable in the Church.

As for the flourishing, Sir, of the Universities, what has been before said, aims not in the least at Gentlemen, whose coming thither is chiefly for the hopes of single improvement, and whose Estates do free them from the necessity of making a gain of *Arts* and *Sciences*; but onely as such, as intend to make Learning their Profession, as well as Accomplishment. So that our Schools may be still as full of Flourishings, of fine Cloaths, rich Gowns, and future Benefactors, as ever. And suppose we do imagine, as it is necessary we should, that the Number should be a little lessen'd,

this

this surely will not abate the true splendour of an University in any Man's opinion; but his, who reckons the flourishing thereof, rather from the multitude of meer Gowns, than from the Ingenuity and Learning of those that wear them; no more than we have reason to count the flourishing of the Church, from that vast number of People that crowd into Holy-Orders, rather than from those Learned and useful Persons that defend her Truths, and manifest her Ways.

But, I say, I do not see any perfect necessity, that our Schools should hereupon be thinn'd and less frequented, having said nothing against the Multitude, but the indiscreet Choice. If therefore, instead of such either of inferiour Parts, or a feeble Constitution, or of unable Friends, there were pick'd out those that were of a tolerable Ingenuity, of a study-bearing Body, and had good hopes of being continued; as hence there is nothing to hinder our Universities from being full, so likewise from being of great Credit and Learning.

Not to deny then, but that now and then there has been a Lad of very submissive Parts, and perhaps no great share of time allow'd

allow'd him for his Studies, who have proved, beyond all expectation, brave and glorious: Yet surely we are not to over-reckon this so rare a hit, as to think that one such proving Lad, should make recompense and satisfaction for those many weak ones (as the common people love to phrase them) that are in the Church. And that no care ought to be taken, no choice made, no Maintenance provided or considered, because now and then in an Age, one miraculously, beyond all hopes, proves learned and useful, is a practise, whereby never greater Mischiefs, and disesteem has been brought upon the Clergy.

I have in short, Sir, run over, what seemed to me, the first Occasions of that small learning, that is to be found amongst some of the Clergy. I shall now pass from Schooling to the Universities.

I am not so unmindful of that Devotion which I owe to those places, nor of that great esteem I profess to have of the Guides and Governours thereof, as to go about to prescribe new Forms and Schemes of Education, where Wisdom has laid her Top-stone. Neither shall I here examine which Philosophy, the old or new, makes the best

Sermons:

Sermons: it is hard to say that Exhortations can be to no purpose, if the Preacher believes that the Earth turns round: Or, that his Reproofs can take no effect, unless he will suppose a *Vacuum*. There has been good Sermons, no question, made in the days of *Materia Prima*, and *Occult Qualities*: And there is doubtless, still good Discourses now under the Reign of *Atoms*.

There is but two things wherein I count the Clergy chiefly concerned (as to University Improvements) that at present I shall venture to make Inquiry into.

And the first is this; Whether or no it were not highly useful (especially for the Clergy, who are supposed to speak *English* to the People) that *English* Exercises were imposed upon Lads, if not in publick Schools, yet at least privately. Not, but that I am abundantly satisfied that *Latin*, O *Latin*! 'tis the all in all; and the very Cream of the Jest: As also, that Oratory is the same in all Languages: The same Rules being observed, the same Method, the same Arguments and Arts of perswasion; But yet it seems somewhat beyond the reach of ordinary Youth, so to apprehend those general

general Laws, as to make a just and allowable use of them in all Languages, unless exercised particularly in them. Now, we know, the Language that the very learned part of this Nation must trust to live by, unless it be to make a Bond, or prescribe a Purge (which possibly may not oblige or work so well in any other Language as *Latin*) is the *English*. And after a Lad has taken his leave of Madam Univerlity, God bless him, he is not likely to deal afterward with much *Latin*, unless it be to checker a Sermon, or to say *Salvete* to some travelling *Dominatio Vestra*. Neither is it enough to say, that the *English* is the Language with which we are swadled and rock'd asleep, and therefore there needs none of this artificial and superadded care. For there be those that speak very well, plainly, and to the purpose, and yet write most pernicious and phantastical stuff: Thinking, that whatsoever is written, must be more than ordinary, must be beyond the guise of common speech, must savour of Reading and Learning, though it be altogether needless, and perfectly ridiculous.

Neither ought we to suppose it sufficient, that English Books be frequently read;

because

because there be of all sorts good and bad (and the worst are likely to be admired by Youth more than the best) unless Exercises be required of Lads, whereby it may be guessed what their judgment is, where they be mistaken, and what Authors they propound to themselves for imitation. For by this means they may be corrected and advised early, according as occasion shall require: Which if not done, their ill stile will be so confirmed, their improprieties of speech will become so natural, that it will be a very hard matter to stir or alter their fashion of Writing. It is very curious to observe, what delicate Letters your young Students write after they have got a little smack of University Learning! In what elaborate heights, and tossing nonsense will they greet a right-down *English* Father, or Country Friend! If there be a plain word in it, and such as is used at home, this tasts not, say they, of Education among Philosophers, and it is counted damnable Duncery and want of Phansie. Because, *Your Loving Friend*, or *Humble Servant*, is a common phrase in Country-Letters; therefore the young *Epistler* is *Yours to the Antipodes*, or at least to the

Centre

Centre of the Earth; and because ordinary Folks *love* and *respect* you, therefore you are to him the *Pole Star*, a *Jacob's Staff*, a *Loadstone*, and a *Damask Rose*.

And the misery of it is, this pernicious accustom'd way of expression, does not only oft-times go along with them to their Benefice, but accompanies them to the very Grave: And for the most part an ordinary Cheesmonger or Plum-seller, that scarce ever heard of an University, shall write much better sense, and more to the purpose than those young Philosophers, who injudiciously hunting only for great words, make themselves learnedly ridiculous.

Neither can it be easily apprehended, how the use of *English* Exercises should any ways hinder the improvement in the *Latin* Tongue, but rather be much to its advantage: And this may be easily believed, considering what dainty stuff is usually produced for a *Latin* Entertainment. Chicken-broth is not thinner than that which is commonly offered for a piece of most pleading and convincing sense. For, I'll but suppose an Academick Youngster to be put upon a *Latin* Oration: Away he goes presently to his Magazine of collected *Phrases*; he

picks

picks out all the *Glitterings* he can find; he hales in all *Proverbs*, *Flowers*, *Poetical Snaps*, Tales out of the *Dictionary*, or else ready *Latin'd* to his hand out of *Lieosthenes*: This done, he comes to the end of the Table, and having made a submissive Leg, and a little admit'd the number, and understanding countenances of his Auditors (let the subject be what it will) he falls presently into a most *lamentable complaint of his insufficiency and tenuity*: *That he, poor thing, hath no acquaintance with above a Muse and a half; and that he never drunk above six-q: of* Helicon, *and you have put him here upon such a task* (perhaps the business is only, which is the noblest Creature a Flea or a Louse) *that would much better fit some old soker at* Parnassus, *than his sipping unexperienc'd Bibbership. Alas, poor Child! he is sorry at the very soul that he has no better speech; and wonders in his heart, that you will lose so much time as to hear him: For he has neither Squibs nor Fireworks, Stars nor Glories; the curs'd Carrier lost his best Book of Phrases, and the Malicious Mice and Rats eat up all his Pearls and Golden Sentences.* Then he tickles over a little the shirts of the Business: By and by, for simi-

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litude from the *Sun* or *Moon*; or if they be not at leisure, from the *grey of a Morn*, a *shady Grove*, or a *purling Stream*. This done, he tells you, *that* Barnaby-bright *would be much too short for him to tell you all that he could say; and so fearing he should break the thread of your patience*, he concludes.

Now it seems, Sir, very probable, that if Lads did but first of all determine in *English*, what they intend to say in *Latin*, they would of themselves soon discern the tristingness of such Apologies, the pitifulness of their matter, and the impertinency of their Tales and Phansies, and would according to their subject, age, and parts, offer that which would be much more manly, and towards tolerable sense. And if I may tell you, Sir, what I really think, most of that Ridiculousness, phantastical Phrases, harsh and sometimes blasphemous Metaphors, abundantly foppish Similitudes, childish and empty Transitions, and the like, so commonly uttered out of Pulpits, and so fatally redounding to the discredit of the Clergy, may in a great measure be charg'd upon the want of that which we have here so much contended for.

The

The second inquiry that may be made, is this: Whether or no Punning, Quibling, and that which they call Joquing, and such other delicacies of Wit, highly admired in some Academick Exercises, might not be very conveniently omited? For one may desire but to know this one thing: In what Profession shall that sort of Wit prove of advantage? As for *Law*, where nothing but the most reaching Subtilty, and the closest Arguing is allow'd of, it is not to be imagined, that blending now and then a piece of a dry Verse, and wreathing here and there an odd *Latin* Saying into a dismal Jingle, should give Title to an Estate, or clear out an Obscure Evidence. And as little serviceable can it be to *Physick*, which is made up of severe Reason, and well-tryed Experiments. And as for *Divinity*, in this place I shall say no more, but that those usually that have been Rope-dancers in the Schools, oft-times prove *Jack-puddings* in the Pulpit. For he that in his youth has allow'd himself this liberty of Academick Wit, by this means he has usually so thinn'd his judgment, becomes so prejudiced against sober sense, and so altogether disposed to trifling and jingling, that so soon as he gets hold

of a Text, he presently thinks he has catch'd one of his old School-questions; and so falls a flinging it out of one hand into the other, tossing it this way and that; lets it run a little upon the Line, then *tantum*, *high jinge*, *come again*; here catching at a word, there lie nibling and sucking at an *and*, a *by*, a *quia* or a *quid*, a *sic* or a *sicut*; and thus minces the Text so small, that his Parishioners, until he rendevouz it again, can scarce tell what's become of it.

But, *shall we debar youth of such an innocent and harmless Recreation, of such a great quickner of Parts, and promoter of Sagacity?* As for the first, its innocency of being allow'd of for a time, I am so far from that perswasion, that from what has been before hinted, I count it perfectly contagious, and as a thing that, for the most part infects the whole life, and influences upon most actions. For he that finds himself to have the right knack of letting off a Joque, and of pleasing the Humsters, he is not only very hardly brought off from admiring those goodly applauses, and heavenly shouts, but it is ten to one if he directs not the whole bent of his Studies to such idle and contemptible Books, as shall only furnish

nish him with Materials for a Laugh, and so neglects all that should inform his Judgment and Reason, and make him a Man of Use and Reputation in this World. And as for the pretence of making People sagacious, and pestilently witty: I shall only desire, that the nature of that kind of Wit may be considered, which will be found to depend upon some such Fooleries as these: As first of all, the lucky ambiguity of some word or sentence. Oh! what a happiness is it, and how much does a Youngster count himself beholden to the Stars, that should help him to such a taking Jest? And whereas there be so many thousand words in the World, and that he should luck upon the right one, that was so very much to his purpose, and that at the explosion made such a goodly report? Or else they rake *Lilly's* Grammar; and if they can but find two or three Letters of any Name in any of the Rules, or Examples of that good Man's Works, it is as very a piece of Wit as any has pass'd in the Town since the King came in. Oh! how the *Press-men* will skip to hear one of those lines well laugh'd at, that they have been so often yerk'd for? It is true, such things as these go for Wit so

long as they continue in *Latin*; but what dismally shrimp'd things would they appear, if turn'd into *English*? And if we search into what was or might be pretended, we shall find the advantages of *Latin* Wit to be very small and slender, when it comes into the World. I mean not only amongst strict Philosophers, and Men of meer Notions, or amongst all-damning and illiterate *Hectors*; but amongst those that are truly ingenious, and judicious Masters of Phansie. We shall find, that a Quotation out of *Qui mihi*, a Axiom out of Logick, a Saying of a Philosopher, or the like, though manag'd with some quickness, and applied with some seeming ingenuity, whatever they did heretofore, will not in our dayes pass, or be accepted for Wit. For we must know, that as we are now in an Age of great Philosophers, and Men of Reason; so of great quickness and phansie: and that *Greek* and *Latin* which heretofore, though never so impertinently fetch'd in, was counted admirable, because it had a learned twang; yet now, such stuff being out of fashion, is esteemed but very bad company. For the World is now, especially in Discourse, for one Language, and he that has somewhat in

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his mind of *Greek* or *Latin*, is requested now adayes to be civil, and translate it into *English* for the benefit of the Company. And he that has made it his whole business, to accomplish himself for the applause of a company of Boys, School-Masters, and the easiest of Countrey Divines, and has been shoulder'd out of the Cock-pit for his Wit; when he comes into the World, is the most likely person to be kick'd out of the Company, for his pedantry and over-weening opinion of himself. And, were it necessary, it is an easie matter to appeal to Wits both Ancient and Modern, that beyond all controversie have been sufficiently approved of, that never, I am confident, received their improvements by employing their Time in Puns and Quibbles. There is the prodigious *Lucian*, the great *Don* of *Manche*, and there is many now living Wits of our own, who never certainly were at all inspir'd from a *Tripos*, *Terræ-filius*, or *Prevaricator's* Speech.

I have ventur'd, Sir, thus far, not to find fault with, but only to enquire into an ancient Custom or two of the Universities, wherein the Clergy seem to be a little concern'd, as to their Education there. I shall

now look upon them as Beneficed, and consider their Preaching: Wherein I pretend to give no Rules, having neither any Gift at it, nor Authority to do it; but only shall make some conjectures at those useless and ridiculous Things, commonly uttered in Pulpits, that are generally disgusted, and are very apt to bring contempt upon the Preacher, and that Religion which he professes.

Amongst the first things that seem to be useless, may be reckon'd the high tossing and swaggering Preaching; either mountingly Eloquent, or profoundly Learned. For there be a sort of Divines, who if they but happen of an unlucky hard word all the week, they think themselves not careful of their Flock, if they lay it not up till *Sunday* and bestow it amongst them in their next Preachment. Or, if they light upon some difficult and obscure Notion, which their curiosity inclines them to be better acquainted with, how useless soever, nothing so frequent as for them for a month or two months together, to tear and tumble this Doctrine; and the poor People once a week shall come and gaze upon them by the hour, until they Preach themselves, as they think, into a right understanding.

Those

Those that are inclinable to make these useless Speeches to the People, they do it, for the most part, upon one of these two considerations: Either out of simple phantastick Glory, and a great studiousness of being wonder'd at; as if getting into the Pulpit were a kind of Staging, where nothing was to be considered, but how much the Sermon takes, and how much star'd at: Or else they do this to gain a respect, and reverence from their People; who, say they, are to be puzled now and then, and carried into the Clouds. For, if the Ministers words be such as the Constable uses, his Matter plain and practical, such as comes to the common Market, he may pass possibly for an honest and well-meaning Man, but by no means for any Scholar: Whereas, if he springs forth now and then in high raptures toward the uppermost Heavens, dashing here and there an all-confounding Word; if he soars aloft in unintelligible huffs, Preaches Points deep and mystical, and delivers them as dark and phantastical: this is the way, say they, of being accounted a most able and learned Instructor.

Others there be, whose parts stand not so much towards tall Words and lofty No-

tions, but consist in scattering up and down, and besprinkling all their Sermons with plenty of *Greek* and *Latin*. And because St. *Paul*, once or so, was pleased to make use of a little Heathen *Greek*; and that only, when he had occasion to discourse with some of the learned ones, that well understood him, therefore must they needs bring in twenty Poets and Philosophers (if they can catch them) into an hours talk: Spreading themselves in abundance of *Greek* and *Latin*, to a company perhaps of Farmers and Shepherds. Neither will they rest there, but have at the *Hebrew* also; not contenting themselves to tell the People in general, that they have skill in the Text, and that the Exposition they offer agrees with the Original, but must swagger also over the poor Parishioners with the dreadful *Hebrew* it self, with their *Ben-Israel's*, *Ben-Manasses's*, and many more *Ben's* that they are intimately acquainted with; whereas there is nothing in the Church, or near it by a Mile, that understands them, but God Almighty himself, whom it is supposed, they go not about to inform or satisfie.

This learned way of talking, though for the most part it is done meerly out of ostentation,

tation, yet sometimes (which makes not the case much better) it is done in complement and civility to the all-wise *Patron*, or all-understanding *Justice of the Peace* in the Parish: Who by the common Farmers of the Town, must be thought to understand the most intricate Notions, and the most difficult Languages. Now, what an admirable thing this is? Suppose there should be one or so in the whole Church that understands somewhat besides *English*; Shall not I think that he understands that better? Must I out of Courtship to his Worship and Understanding, and because perhaps I am to dine with him, prate abundance of such stuff, which I must needs know no body understands, or that will be the better for it, but himself, and perhaps scarce he? This I say, because I certainly know several of that disposition, who, if they chance to have a Man of any Learning or Understanding, more then the rest in the Parish, Preach wholly at him, and level most of their Discourses at his supposed capacity; and the rest of the good People shall have onely a handsom gaze or view of the Parson. As if plain words, useful and intelligible instructions, were not as good for an Esquire, or one that is

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in Commission from the King, as for him that holds the Plough or mends Hedges.

Certainly he that considers the design of his Office, and has a Conscience answerable to that Holy Undertaking, must needs conceive himself engaged, not only to mind this or that accomplish'd or well dress'd Person, but must have an universal care and regard of all his Parish. And as he must think himself bound not only to visit Down-beds, and Silken Curtains, but also Flocks and Straw, if there be need: So ought his care to be as large to instruct the Poor, the weak and despicable part of his Parish, as those that sit in the best Pews. He that does otherwise, thinks not at all of a Man's Soul, but onely accommodates himself to fine Cloaths, an abundance of Ribbons, and the highest Seat in the Church: Not thinking, that it will be as much to his reward in the next World, by sober advice, care and instruction, to have saved one that takes Collection as him that is able to relieve half the Town. It is very plain that neither our *Saviour*, when he was upon Earth and taught the World, made any such distinction in his Discourses: What more intelligible to all Man-kind, than his Sermon

upon

upon the Mount? neither did the *Apostles* think of any such way: I wonder whom they take for a Pattern? I will suppose once again, that the design of these Persons is to gain Glory: And I shall ask them; Can there be any greater in the World than doing general good? To omit future rewards: Was it not alwayes esteemed of old, That correcting evil practices, reducing People that lived amiss, was much better, than making a high Rant about a Shittle-cock, and talking *Tara-tantara* about a Feather? Or if they would be only admired, then would I gladly have them consider, What a thin and delicate kind of admiration is likely to be produced, by that which is not at all understood? Certainly that Man that has a design of building up to himself real fame in good earnest, by things well laid and spoken, his way to effect it, is not by talking staringly, and casting a Mist before the Peoples Eyes, but by offering such things by which he may be esteemed with knowledge and understanding.

Thus far concerning hard Words, high Notions, and unprofitable Quotations out of learned Languages. I shall now consider such things as are ridiculous, that serve for

Chimney

Chimney and Market-talk, after the Sermon be done; and that do cause more immediatly the Preacher to be scorn'd and undervalued. I have no reason, Sir, to go about to determine what stile or method is best for the improvement and advantage of all People: For, I question not, but there has been as many several sorts of Preachers as Orators; and though very different, yet useful and commendable in their kind. *Tully* takes very deservedly with many, *Seneca* with others, and *Cato*, no question, said things wisely and well: So doubtless the same place of Scripture may by several be variously considered; and although their method & stile be altogether different, yet they may all speak things very convenient for the People to know, and be advis'd of. But yet certainly what is most undoubtedly useless, and empty, or what is judg'd absolutely ridiculous, not by this or that curious or squemish Auditor, but by every Man in the *Corporation* that understands but plain *English* and common sense, ought to be avoided. For all People are naturally born with such a judgment of true and allowable *Rhetorick*, that is, of what is decorous and convenient to be spoken, that what ever is

grossly

grosly otherwise, is usually ungrateful, not only to the wise and skilful part of the Congregation, but shall seem also ridiculous to the very unlearned Tradesmen, and their young Apprentices. Amongst which may be chiefly reckoned these following; harsh Metaphors, childish Similitudes, and ill-applied Tales.

The first main thing, I say, that makes many Sermons so ridiculous, and the Preachers of them so much disparag'd and undervalued, is an inconsiderate use of frightful Metaphors; which making such a remarkable impression upon the Ears, and leaving such a jarring twang behind them, are oftentimes remembred to the discredit of the Minister, as long as he continues in the Parish. I have heard the very Children in the Streets, and the little Boyes close about the Fire, refresh themselves strangely, but with the repetition of a few of such far-fetch'd and odd-sounding Expressions: *Tully* therefore and *Cæsar*, the two greatest Masters of *Roman* Eloquence, were very wary and sparing of that sort of Rhetorick: We may reade many a Page in their Works, before we meet with any of those Bears; and if you do light upon one or so, it shall not

make

make your hair stand right up, or put you into a fit of Convulsion; but it shall be so soft, significant, and familiar, as if it were made for the very purpose. But as for the common sort of people that are addicted to this way of expression in their Discourses; away presently to both the *Indies*, rake Heaven and Earth, down to the bottom of the Sea, then tumble over all Arts and Sciences, ransack all Shops and Warehouses, spare neither Camp nor City, but that they will have them. So fond are such deceived ones of these same gay words, that they count all Discourses empty, dull, and cloudy, unless bespangled with these Glittering: Nay, so injudicious, and impudent together, will they sometimes be, that the *Almighty* himself is often in danger of being dishonoured by these indiscreet and horrid Metaphor-mongers: And when they thus blaspheme the God of Heaven, by such unhallowed Expressions, to make amends, they'l put you in, an *As it were*, forsooth, or, *As I may so say*; that is, they will make bold to speak what they please concerning God himself, rather than omit what they judge, though never so false, to be witty: And then they come in hobling with their lame

lame submission, and with their *Reverence be it spoken.* As if it were not much better to leave out what they foresee is likely to be interpreted for Blasphemy, or at least great Extravagancy, than to utter that, for which their own Reason and Conscience tells them, they are bound to lay in before-hand an excuse.

To which may be further subjoyn'd, That Metaphors, though very apt and allowable, are intelligible but to some sorts of Men, of this or that kind of Life, of this or that Profession: For example; Perhaps one Gentleman's metaphorical knack of Preaching comes of the Sea; and then we shall hear of nothing but *Star-board* and *Lar-board*, of *Stems*, *Sterns* and *Fore-castles*, and such like Salt-water Language; so that one had need take a Voyage to *Smirna* or *Aleppo*, and very warily attend to all the Saylors terms, before I shall in the least understand my Teacher. Now, although such a Sermon may possibly do some good in a *Coast-Town*, yet upward into the Country in an Inland-Parish, it will do no more than *Syriack* or *Arabick*. Another he falls a fighting with his Text, and makes a pitch'd Battel of it, dividing it into the *Right-wing* and *Left-wing*, then

then he *rears* it, *flanks* it, *entrenches* it, *storms* it; and then he musters all again, to see what word was lost, or lam'd in the Skirmish, and so falling on again with fresh Valour, he fights backward and forward, Charges through and through, Routs, Kills, Takes; and then, *Gentlemen, as you were.* Now to such of his Parish as have been in the late Warrs, this is not very formidable; for they do but suppose themselves at *Edgehill* or *Naseby*, and they are not much fear'd at his Doctrine: But as for others, who have not had such fighting opportunities, it is very lamentable to consider, how shivering they lie without understanding, till the Barrel be over. Like instance might be easily given of many more Discourses; the metaphorical phrasing whereof, depending upon peculiar Arts, Customs, Trades, and Professions, makes them useful and intelligible only to such who have been very well busied in such like employments.

Another thing, Sir, that brings great dis-respect and mischief upon the Clergy, and that differs not much from what were immediately before, is their packing their Sermons so full of *Similitudes*; which, all the World know, carry with them but very small

small force of Argument, unless there be an exact Agreement with that which is compared; of which there is very seldom any sufficient care taken. Besides, those that are addicted to this slender way of discourse, for the most part, do so weaken and enfeeble their judgement, by contenting themselves to understand by colours, features, and glimpses, that they perfectly omit all the more profitable searching into the nature and causes of things themselves. By which means it necessarily comes to pass, that what they undertake to prove, and clear out to the Congregation, must needs be so faintly done, and with such little force of Argument, that the conviction or perswasion will last no longer in the Parishioners minds, than the warmth of those Similitudes shall glow in their Phansie. So that he that has either been instructed in some part of his Duty, or excited to the performance of the same, not by any judicious dependence of things, and lasting reason, but by such faint and toyish evidence; his understanding upon all occasions will be as apt to be misled as ever, and his affections as troublesome and ungovernable.

But they are not so unserviceable, as usu-

ally they are ridiculous; for People of the weakeſt parts are moſt commonly overborn with theſe fooleries; which together with the great difficulty of their being prudently mannag'd, muſt needs occaſion them, for the moſt part, to be very trifling and childiſh. Eſpecially, if we conſider the choiceneſs of the Authors, out of which they are furniſhed: There is the never-to-be-commended-enough *Licoſthenes*; there is alſo the admirable Piece, called *the ſecond Part of Wits Common-wealth* (I pray mind it, it is the ſecond Part, not the firſt): and there is beſides, a Book wholly conſiſting of Similitudes, applyed and ready fitted to moſt Preaching-Subjects, for the help of young-Beginners, who ſometimes will not make them hit handſomly. 'Tis very well known, that ſuch as are poſſeſs'd with an admiration of ſuch Eloquence, think that they are very much encourag'd in their way, by the Scripture it ſelf: For, ſay they, did not our bleſſed *Saviour* himſelf uſe many Metaphors, and many Parables? And did not his Diſciples, following his ſo excellent an Example, do the like? And is not this, not only Warrant enough, but near upon a Command to us ſo for to do? If you pleaſe there-

therefore we will see what our Saviour does in this Case. In St. *Matthew* he tells his Disciples, that they *are the Salt of the Earth; that they are the Light of the World; that they are a City set on a Hill:* Furthermore, he tells his Apostles, that *he sends them forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves*; and bids them therefore, *be as wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves.* Now, are not all these things plain and familiar, even almost to Children themselves, that can but taste and see; and to Men of the lowest Education, and meanest Capacities?

I shall not here insist upon those special and admirable Reasons, for which our Saviour made use of so many Parables: Only thus much is needful to be said, namely, that they are very much mistaken, that from hence think themselves tollerated to turn all the World into frivolous and abominable Similitudes. As for our Saviour, when he spoke a Parable, he was pleased to go no further than the Fields, the Sea-shaor, a Garden, a Vineyard, or the like; which are things, without the knowledge whereof, scarce any Man can be supposed to live in this World. But as for our Metaphorical and Similitude-Men of the Pulpit, these

things to them are too ſtill and languid, they do not rattle and rumble: Theſe lie too near home, and within vulgar kenn. There is little on this ſide the Moon that will content them: Up preſently to the *Primum-Mobile*, and the trepidation of the Firmament: Dive into the Bowels and hid Treaſures of the Earth: Diſpatch forthwith for *Peru* and *Jamaica*; a Town-bred or Country-bred Similitude, it is worth nothing! *'Tis reported of a Tree growing upon the bank of* Euphrates, *the great River* Euphrates, *that it brings forth an Apple, to the Eye very fair and tempting, but inwardly it is fill'd with nothing but uſeleſs and deceitful duſt: Even ſo, duſt we are, and to duſt we muſt all go.* Now, what a lucky diſcovery was this, that a Man's Body ſhould be ſo exactly like an Apple? And I will aſſure you, that this was not thought on till within theſe few years. And I am afraid too, he had a kind of a hint of this from another, who had formerly found out, that a Man's Soul was like an Oyſter; For ſayes he, in his Prayer, *Our Souls are conſtantly gaping after thee, O Lord; yea verily, our Souls do gape, even as an Oyſter gapeth.* It ſeems pretty hard, at firſt ſight, to bring into a

Ser-

Sermon all the Circles of the Globe, and all the frightful terms of *Aſtronomy*. But, I'll aſſure you, Sir, it is to be done, becauſe it has been; But not by every Bungler and ordinary Text-divider, but by a Man of great Cunning and Experience. There is a place in the Prophet *Malachi*, where it will do very neatly, and that is chap. 4. verſ. 2. *But unto you that fear my Name, ſhall the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his Wings*: From which words, in the firſt place, it plainly appears, that our *Saviour* paſſed through all the twelve Signs of the *Zodiack*: And more than that too, all proved by very apt and familiar places of Scripture. Firſt then, our Saviour was in *Aries*; or elſe what means that of the Pſalmiſt? *The Mountains skipped like Rams, and the little Hills like Lambs.* And again, that in the *ſecond* of the *Kings* ch. 3. ver. 4. *And* Meſha *King of* Moab *was a Sheep-Maſter, and rendered unto the King of* Iſrael *an hundred thouſand Lambs*: and what follows? *and an hundred thouſand Rams, with the Wool.* Mind it; *it was the King of Iſrael.* In like manner was he in *Taurus*, Pſal. 22. 12. *Many Bulls have compaſſed me: Strong Bulls of Baſhan have beſet me round.*

They were not ordinary Bulls: They were *compassing Bulls*, they were *besetting Bulls*, they were *strong* Bashan *Bulls*. What need I speak of *Gemini*? Surely you cannot but remember *Jacob* and *Esau*, *Gen.* 25. 24. *And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold there were Twins in her Womb*. Or of *Cancer*? when as the *Psalmists* says so plainly: *What ailed thee, O thou Sea, that thou fleddest? thou* Jordan, *that thou wast driven back*? Nothing more plain. It were as easie to shew the like in all the rest of the Signs: But instead of that, I shall rather chuse to make this one practical Observation: That the Mercy of God to Mankind in sending his Son into the World, was a very *signal* Mercy: it was a *Zodiacal* Mercy. I say it was truly *Zodiacal*: For *Christ* keeps within the *Tropicks*: He goes not out of the *Pale* of the Church. But yet he is not alwayes at the same distance from a Believer: Sometimes he withdraws himself into the *Apogeum of doubt, sorrow, and despair, but then he comes again into the Perigaum of joy, content, and assurance: But as for Heathens and Unbelievers, they are all Artick and antartick Reprobates.* Now when such stuff as this, (as sometimes 'tis)

is

is vented in a poor Parish, where People can scarce tell what day of the month it is by the *Almanack*, how seasonable and savory it is likely to be? It seems also not very easie, for a Man in his Sermon to learn his Parishioners how to dissolve Gold: of what, and how the stuff is made. Now, to ring the Bells, and call the People on purpose together, would be but a blunt business; but to do it neatly, and when no Body look'd for it, that's the rarity and art of it. Suppose then, that he takes for his Text that of St. *Matthew, Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.* Now tell me, Sir, do you not perceive the Gold to be in a dismal fear, to curl and quiver at the first reading of these words. It must come in thus: *The bloits and blurrs of our Sins must be taken out by the* Aqua-fortis *of our Tears; to which* Aqua-fortis *if you put a fifth part of* Sal-Almoniack, *and set them in a gentle heat, it makes* Aqua-Regia, *which dissolves Gold.* And now 'tis out. Wonderful are the things that are to be done by the help of Metaphors and Similitudes! And I'll undertake, that with a little more pains and consideration, out of the very same words, he could have taught the

People how to make Custards, Marmalade, or to stew Prunes. But pray, why the *Aqua-fortis* of Tears? For, if it so falls out, that there should chance to be neither *Apothecary* nor *Druggist* at Church, there's an excellent Jest wholly lost. Now had he been so considerate, as to have laid his Wit in some more common and intelligible Meterial: For Example, had he said that the *blots of Sin*, will be easily taken out *by the Soap of Sorrow, and the Fullers-Earth of Contrition*; then possibly the Parson and the People might all have admired one another. For there be many a Good-Wife that understands very well all the intrigues of Pepper, Salt, and Vinegar, who knows not any thing of the all-powerfulness of *Aqua-fortis*, how that it is such a Spot-removing Liquor. I cannot but consider with what understanding the People sighed and cryed, when the Minister made for them this Metaphysical Confession: *Omnipotens All*; *Thou art only*: *Because thou art All, and because thou only art*: *As for us, we are not, but we seem to be*; *and only seem to be, because we are not*; *for we be but Mites of Entity, and Crumbs of somebing*; and so on: As if a company of Country People

were

were bound to understand *Suarez*, and all the *School-Divines*.

And as some are very high and learned in their attempts; so others there be who are of somewhat too mean and dirty imaginations: Such was he, who goes by the name of *Parson Slip-stocking*: Who preaching about the Grace and Assistance of God, and that of our selves we are able to do nothing; advised his Beloved to take him it this plain Similitude. *A Father calls his Child to him, saying, Child, pull off this Stocking: The Child mightily joyful, that it should pull off Father's Stocking, takes hold of the Stocking, and tuggs, and pulls, and sweats, but to no purpose; for Stocking stirs not, for it is but a Child that pulls: Then the Father bids the Child to rest a little, and try again; so then the Child sets on again, tuggs again, and pulls again, and sweats again, but no Stocking comes; for Child is but Child: Then at last the Father, taking pitty upon his Child, puts his hand behind, and slips down the Stocking, and off comes the Stocking: Then how does the Child rejoyce? For Child hath pull'd off Father's Stocking. Alas, poor Child! it was not Child's strength, it was not Child's sweating*

that

that got of the Stocking, but yet it was the Fathers hand behind that slipt down the Stocking. Even so —— Not much unlike to this was he, that Preaching about the Sacrament and Faith, makes Christ a *Shop-keeper*; telling you, that *Christ is a Treasury of all Wares and Commodities:* And thereupon, opening his wide throat, cryes aloud, *Good People, what do you lack? what do you buy? Will you buy any Balm of Gilead, any Eye-salve, any Myrrhe, Aloes, or Cassia? shall I fit you with a Robe of Righteousness, or with a white Garment! See here! what is it you want? Here's a very choice Armory: shall I shew you an Helmet of Salvation, a Sheild or a Breast-plate of Faith? Or will you please to walk in, and see some precious Stones? a Jasper, a Saphire, or a Chalcedonit? Speak, what do you buy?* Now for my part, I must needs say, and I much phansie I speak the mind of thousands, that it had been much better for such an imprudent and ridiculous Bawler as this, to have been condemn'd to have cryed Oysters or Brooms, than to discredit, after this unsanctified rate, his Profession, and our Religion.

It would be an endless thing, Sir, to count up

up to you all the Follies, for an hundred years last past, that have been Preached and Printed of this kind. But yet I cannot omit that of the famous *Divine*, in his time, who advising the People in days of danger to run unto the Lord, tells them, *that they cannot go to the Lord, much less run without feet: There be therefore two feet to run to the Lord, Faith and Prayer:* 'Tis plain *that Faith is a foot,* for by Faith we stand, 2 Cor. 1. 24. *therefore by Faith we must run to the Lord who is faithful. The second is Prayer, a spiritual Leg to bear us thither: Now, that Prayer is a spiritual Leg, appears from several Places of Scripture; as from that of* Jonah, *speaking of coming,* chap. 2. vers. 7. And my Prayer came unto thine holy Temple: *And likewise from that of the Apostle, who says,* Heb. 4. 16. Let us therefore go unto the Throne of Grace: *Both intimating, that Prayer is the spiritual Leg, there being no coming or going to the Lord without the Leg of Prayer.* He further adds: *Now, that those feet may be able to bear us thither, we must put on the Hose of Faith; for the Apostle says our feet must be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.* The truth of it is, the Au-

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ther is somewhat obscure: For at first, Faith was a *Foot*; and by and by it is a *Hose*; and at last it proves a *Shoo*. If he had pleased, he could have made it any thing.

Neither can I let pass that of a later Author; who telling us, *It is Goodness by which we must ascend to Heaven*; and that *Goodness is the Milky-way to* Jupiter's *Palace*; could not rest here, but must tell us further, that *to strengthen us in our journey, we must not take morning Milk, but some morning Meditations*; fearing, I suppose, lest some people should mistake, and think to go to Heaven by eating now and then a Mess of *Morning Milk*, because the way was *milky*.

Neither ought that to be omitted, not long since printed, upon those words of St. *John*, *These things I write unto you, that you sin not*. The Observation is, That it is the purpose of the Scripture to drive Men from Sin. *These Scriptures contain Doctrins, Precepts, Promises, Threatnings, and Histories. Now*, sayes he, *take these five smooth stones, and put them into the scrip of the Heart, and throw them with the Sling of Faith, by the Hand of a strong Resolution, against the forehead of Sin, and we shall see it, like* Goliah, *fall before us.*

But

But I shall not trouble you any further upon this subject; but, if you have a mind to hear any more of this stuff, I shall refer you to the learned and judicious Author of the *Friendly Debates*; who particularly has at large discovered the intolerable fooleries of this way of talking. I shall only add thus much; that such as go about to fetch blood into their pale and lean discourses, by the help of their brisk and sparkling Similitudes, ought well to consider whether their Similitudes be true. I am confident, Sir, you have heard it many and many a time (or if need be, I can shew you't in a Book) that when the Preacher happens to talk, how that the things here below will not satisfie the Mind of Man; then comes in, *the round World, which cannot fill the triangular Heart of Man*: Whereas every Butcher knows, that the Heart is no more triangular, than an ordinary Pear, or a Child's Top: But because *Triangular* is a hard word, and perhaps a Jest, therefore people have stolen it one from another, these two or three hundred years: And, for ought I know, much longer; for I cannot direct to the first Inventer of the phansie.

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In like manner they are to consider, what things either in the Heavens, or belonging to the Earth, have been found out by experience to contradict what has been formerly allow'd of. Thus, because some ancient *Astronomers* had observ'd, that both the distances, as well as the Revolutions of the Planets, were in some proportion or harmony one to another; therefore people that abounded more with imagination than skill, presently phansi'd the *Moon*, *Mercury*, and *Venus* to be a kind of Violins or Trebles to *Jupiter* and *Saturn*; and that the *Sun* and *Mars* supply'd the room of Tenors; the *Primum Mobile* running Division all the time. So that one could scarce hear a Sermon, but they must give you a touch of the *Harmony of the Spheres*. Thus, Sir, you shall have 'm take that of St. *Paul*, about *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity*: And instead of a sober instructing the People in those eminent and excellent Graces, they shall only ring you over a few changes upon the three words: crying, *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity*: *Hope*, *Faith* and *Charity*; and so on: And when they have done their Peal, they shall tell you, that *this is much better than the Harmony of the Spheres*?

At other times I have heard a long Chyming only between two words; as suppose *Divinity* and *Philosophy*, or *Revelation* and *Reason*; setting forth with *Revelation* first: *Revelation is a Lady: Reason an Handmaid. Revelation's the Esquire: Reason the Page. Revelation's the Sun: Reason but the Moon. Revelation is Manna: Reason's but an Acorn. Revelation a Wedge of Gold: Reason a small piece of Silver.* Then by and by Reason gets it and leads it away. *Reason indeed is very good; but Revelation is much better. Reason is a Counsellor; but Revelation is the Law-giver. Reason is a Candle; but Revelation is the Snuffer.* Certainly those People are possess'd with a very great degree of dulness, who, living under the means of such enlightning Preaching, should not be mightily settled in the right Notion, and true bounds of Faith and Reason.

Not less ably, me-thought, was the difference between the Old Covenant and New, lately determined. *The Old Covenant was of Works; the New Covenant of Faith. The Old Covenant was by* Moses; *the New by* Christ. *The Old was heretofore; the New afterwards. The Old was first; the New was second. Old things are passed away; behold all*

all things are become new. And so the business was very fundamentally done.

I shall say no more upon this subject, but this one thing, which relates to what was said a little before: He that has got a set of Similitudes, calculated according to the old Philosophy, and *Ptolomy's* Systeme of the World, must burn his common-place-Book, and go a gleaning for new ones: It being now adays much more genteile and warrantable, to take a Similitude from the *Man in the Moon*, than from *solid* Orbs: For though few People do absolutely believe, that there is any such *Entimal Person* there, yet the thing is possible, whereas the other is not.

I have now done, Sir, with that imprudent way of speaking, by Metaphor and Similitude. There be many other things commonly spoken out of the Pulpit, that are much to the disadvantage, and discredit of the Clergy, that ought also to be briefly hinted: And that I may the better light upon them, I shall observe their common method of Preaching.

Before the Text be divided, a *Preface* is to be made: And it is a great chance, if, first of all, the Minister does not make his

Text

Text to be like something or other. For Example: One he tells you, *And now (methinks) my Text, like an ingenious Picture, looks upon all here present; in which both Nobles and People may behold their sin and danger represented.* This was a Text out of *Hosea*. Now, had it been out of any other place of the Bible, the Gentleman was sufficiently resolv'd, to make it like an ingenious Picture. Another taking (perhaps) the very same words, says, *I might compare my Text to the Mountains of* Bether, *where the Lord disports himself as a young Hart, or a pleasant Roe among the Spices.* Another Man's Text is *like the Rod of Moses, to divide the Waves of Sorrow*; or, *like the Mantle of Elijah, to restrain the swelling floods of Grief.* Another gets to his Text thus; *As Solomon went up six steps to come to the great Throne of Ivory; so must I ascend six degrees to come to the high top-meaning of my Text.* Another thus: *As* Deborah *arose and went with* Barack *to Kadesh; so, if you will go along with him, and call in at the third Verse of the Chapter, he will shew you the meaning of his Text.*

Another he phancies his Text to be extraordinarily like to an *Orchard of Pomegra-*

nates; or like St. Matthew, *sitting at the Receit of Custom*; *or like the Dove that* Noah *sent out of the Ark*. I believe there are above forty places of Scripture that have been like *Rachel* and *Leah*: And there is one in *Genesis*, as I well remember, that is *like a pair of Compasses straddling*: And, if I be not much mistaken, there is one somewhere else, that is *like a man going to* Jericho.

Now, Sir, having thus made the way to the Text, as smooth and plain as any thing; with a *Preface* perhaps from *Adam*; though his business lie at the other end of the *Bible*: In the next place, he comes to *divide* the Text.

——— *Hic Labor, hoc Opus.*
Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum,
Silvestrem tenuis ———

Now come off the Gloves, and the Hands being well chafed, he shrinks up his shoulders, and stretches forth himself as if he were going to cleave a Bullock's head, or rive the body of an Oak. But we must observe, that there is a great difference of Texts. For all Texts come not asunder alike: For sometimes the words *naturally fall* asunder;

asunder; sometimes they *drop* asunder; sometimes they *melt*; sometimes they *untwist*; and there be some words so willing to be parted, that they *divide themselves*, to the great ease and rejoycing of the Minister. But if they will not easily come in pieces; then he falls to hacking and hewing, as if he would make all fly into shivers. The truth of it is, I have known, now and then, some knotty Texts, that have been devided seven or eight times over, before they could make them *split* handsomly, according to their mind.

But then comes the joy of joyes, when the parts *jingle*, or begin with the same *letter*; and especially if in *Latin*. O how it tickled the *Divider*, when he had got his Text into those two excellent Branches; *Accusatio vera*: *Comminatio severa*. *A charge full of verity*: *A discharge of severity*. And I'll warrant you that did not please a little, *viz.* there is in the words *duplex miraculum*; *miraculum in modo*; and *miraculum in modo*. But the luckyest that I have met withal, both for wit and keeping the letter, is upon those words of St. *Matth.* 12. 43, 44, 45. *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a Man, he walketh through dry*

place, seeking rest, and finding none, Then he saith, I will return, &c. In which words all these strange things were found out. First, there was a *Captain* and a *Castle*. Do ye see, Sir, the same letter? Then there was an *ingress*, an *egress*; and a *regress*, or *reingress*. Then there was *unrooſting* and *unresting*. Then there was *number* and *name*, *manner* and *measure*, *trouble* and *tryall*, *resolution* and *revolution*, *assaults* and *assassination*, *voidness* and *vacuity*. This was done at the same time, by the same Man: But, to confess the truth of it, 'twas a good long Text, and so he had the greater advantage.

But for a short Text, that certainly was the greatest *break* that ever was; which was occasioned from those words of St. *Luke* 23. 28. *Weep not for me, weep for your selves*; or, as some read it, *but weep for your selves*. It is a plain case, Sir, here's but eight words, and the business was so cunningly ordered, that there sprung out eight parts: *Here are*, sayes the Doctor, *eight words, and eight parts.* 1. *Weep not.* 2. *But weep.* 3. *Weep not, but weep.* 4. *Weep for me.* 5. *For your selves.* 6. *For me, for your selves.* 7. *Weep not for me.* 8. *But weep*

weep for your ſelves. That is to ſay: *North, North and by Eaſt. North North Eaſt, North Eaſt and by North, North Eaſt, North Eaſt and by Eaſt, Eaſt North Eaſt, Eaſt and by North, Eaſt* —— Now it ſeems not very eaſie to determine, which has obliged the World moſt, he that found out the *Compaſs*, or he that devided the forementioned Text: But I ſuppoſe the cracks will go generally upon the *Doctor's* ſide; by reaſon what he did, was done by undoubted Art, and abſolute Induſtry; but as for the other, the common report is, that it was found out by meer fooliſh fortune. Well, let it go how it will, queſtionleſs, they will be both famous in their way, and honourably mentioned to Poſterity.

Neither ought he to be altogether ſlighted, who taking that of *Gen.* 48. 2. for his Text, *viz. And one told* Jacob, *and ſaid, Behold, thy Son* Joſeph *cometh unto thee*; preſently perceived, and made it out to the People, that *his Text was a Spiritual Dial. For*, ſayes he, *here be in my Text twelve words, which do plainly repreſent the twelve hours. Twelve words: And one told* Jacob, *and ſaid, Thy Son* Joſeph *cometh unto thee. And here is, beſides* Behold, *which is the*

Hand of the Dyal, that turns and points at every word in the Text. And one told Jacob, *and said,* Behold, *thy son* Joseph *cometh unto thee. For it is not said,* Behold *Jacob, or* Behold *Joseph: But it is, And one told* Jacob, *and said,* Behold, *thy son* Joseph *cometh unto thee. That is to say:* Behold *And.* Behold *one.* Behold *told.* Behold *Jacob. Again* Behold *and.* Behold *said. (And also:)* Behold *Behold,* &c. *Which is the reason that this word* Behold *is placed in the middle of the other twelve words, indifferently pointing at each word.*

Now, as it needs must be One of the Clock, before it can be Two or Three; so I shall handle this word And, *the first word in the Text, before I meddle with the following.* And *one told* Jacob: *This word* And *is but a Particle, and a small one: But small things are not to be despised: St.* Mat. 18. 10. Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones. *For this* And *is as the Tacks and Loops amongst the Curtains of the* Tabernacle. *The Tacks put into the Loops did couple the Curtains of the Tent, and sew the Tent together: So this Particle* And *being put into the Loops of the words immediately before the Text, does couple*

the

the Text to the foregoing Verſe, and ſewes them cloſe together.

I ſhall not trouble you, Sir, with the reſt; being much after this witty rate, and to as much purpoſe. But we'll go on if you pleaſe, Sir, to the cunning *Obſervations, Doctrines,* and *Inferences,* that are commonly made and rais'd from places of Scripture.

One he takes that for his Text, *Pſal. 68. 3. But let the Righteous be glad.* From whence he raiſeth this Doctrine, That *there is a Spirit of Singularity in the Saints of God. But let the Righteous.* A Doctrine, I'll warrant him, of his own raiſing; it being not very eaſie for any body to prevent him.

Another, he takes that of *Iſa. 41. 14, 15. Fear not thou Worm* Jacob, &c. *thou ſhalt threſh the Mountains* ——— Whence he obſerves, That the Worm *Jacob* was a threſhing Worm.

Another, that of *Gen. 44. 1. And he commanded the Steward of the Houſe, ſaying, Fill the Mens ſacks with food as much as they can carry.* And makes his Note from the words; that *great Sacks, and many Sacks, will hold more than few Sacks, and little*

ones. For look, sayes he, *how they came prepared with Sacks and Beasts, so they were sent back with Corn: The greater and the more sacks they had prepared, the more Corn they carry away; if they prepared but small sacks, and a few, they had carried away the less:* Verily and indeed extraordinarily true.

Another he falls upon that of *Isa.* 58.5. *Is it such a Fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a Bulrush?* The observation is, That *Repentance for an hour, or a day, is not worth a Bulrush.* And there, I think he hit the business.

But of these, Sir, I can shew you a whole Book full, in a Treatise called *Flames* and *Discoveries*: Consisting of very notable and extraordinary things, which the inquisitive *Author* had privately observed, and discovered, upon reading the *Evangelists.* As for example: Upon reading that of St. *John chap.* 2. *vers.* 15. *And when he had made a scorge of small Cords, he drove them all out of the Temple:* This prying Divine makes these *Discoveries. I discover,* sayes he, *in the first place, that in the Church or Temple, a scourge may be made. And when he had made a scourge. Secondly,* that

that it may be made use on: He drove them all out of the Temple. And it was a great chance, that he had not discovered a third thing, and that is, that *the scourge was made before it was made use of.* Upon *Mat.* 4. 25. *And there followed him great Multitudes of People from* Galilee. *I discover,* sayes he, *when* Jesus *prevails with us, we shall soon leave our* Galilees. *I discover also,* sayes he, *a great Miracle,* viz. *that the way after* Jesus *being straight, that such a multitude should follow him.* Matth. 5. 1. *And seeing the Multitude, he went up into a Mountain:* Upon this he discovers several very remarkable things: First, he discovers, *that* Christ *went from the Multitude.* Secondly, *That it is safe taking warning at our eyes; for seeing the Multitude he went up.* Thirdly, *It is not fit to be always upon the plains and flats with the Multitude; but if we be risen with* Christ, *to seek those things that are above.* He discovers also very strange things from the latter part of the fore-mentioned Verse: *And when he was set, his Disciples came unto him.* 1. Christ *is not always in motion: And when he was set.* 2. *He walks not on the Mountain, but sits: And when he was set.* From whence also, in the third

place, he adviſes People, That *when they are Teaching, they ſhould not move too much, for that is to be carried to and fro with every wind of Doctrine*: Now certainly never was this place of Scripture more ſeaſonably brought in. Now, Sir, if you be for a very ſhort and witty Diſcovery, let it be upon that of St. *Mat.* 6. 27. *which of you by taking thought, can add one Cubit unto his ſtature?* The Diſcovery is this: *That whilſt the Diſciples were taking thought for a Cubit,* Chriſt *takes them down a Cubit lower.* Notable alſo are two Diſcoveries made upon St. *Mat.* 8. 1. *When he came down from the Mountain, great Multitudes followed him.* 1. *That* Chriſt *went down as well as went up; When he came down from the Mountain.* 2. *That the Multitude did not go hail fellow well met with him, nor before him: For, great Multitudes followed him.* I love with all my heart, when People can prove what they ſay: For there be many that will talk of their Diſcoveries and ſpiritual Obſervations; and when all comes to all, they are nothing but pittiful gheſſes, and ſlender conjectures. In like manner that was no contemptible Diſcovery that was made upon St. *Mat.* 8. 19. *And a certain Scribe came*

and

and said, Master, I will follow thee wherefoever thou goest. A [thou] *shall be followed more then a* [that]: *I will follow* thee *wherefoever thou goest.* And, in my opinion, that was not all together amiss, upon St. *Mat.* 11. 2. *Now when* John *had heard in the Prison the Works of* Christ, *he sent two of his Disciples.* The Discovery is this, That *it is not good sending single to* Christ: *He sent two of his Disciples.* Some also possibly may not dislike that upon St. *Luk.* 12.35. *Let your Loyns be girded. I discover,* says he, *there must be a holy girding and trussing up for Heaven.* But I shall end all with that very politick one, that he makes upon St. *Mat.* 12. 47. *Then one said unto him, Behold thy Mother and thy Brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said, Who is my Mother? and who are my Brethren? I discover now,* sayes he, *that* Jesus *is upon business.* Doubtless, this was one of the greatest Discoverers of hidden mysteries, and one of the most Pryers into Spiritual Secrets, that ever the World was owner of. It was very well that he happen'd upon the Godly Calling, and no secular Employment; or else in good truth, down had they all gone, *Turk, Pope,*

and

and *Emperour*; for he would have discovered them, one way or other, every Man.

Not much unlike to these wonderful Discoverers are they, who chusing to Preach upon some *Point in Divinity*, shall purposely avoid all such plain Texts, as might give them very just occasion to discourse upon their intended Subject, and shall pitch upon some other places of Scripture, which no Creature in the world but themselves did ever imagine that which they offer to be therein designed. My meaning, Sir, is this: Suppose you have a mind to make a Sermon concerning *Episcopacy*, (as in the late Times there was several occasions for it) you must by no means take any place of Scripture that proves or favours that kind of *Ecclesiastical Government*: For then the Plot will be discovered, and the People will say to themselves, we know where to find you, you intend to Preach about *Episcopacy*. But you must take that of the *Acts* c. 16. *v.* 30. *Sirs, What must I do to be saved?* An absolute place for *Episcopacy*, that all former *Divines* had idlely over-look'd: For, *Sirs*, being in the *Greek* Κυριοι, which is to say in true and strict translation, *Lords, what more plain then that of old*, Episcopacy *was not only*

only the acknowledg'd Government, but that Bishops were formerly Peers of the Realm, and so ought to sit in the House of Lords. Or, suppose that you have a mind to commend to your People *Kingly Government*; you must not take any place that is plainly to the purpose, but that of the *Evangelist*, *Seek first the Kingdom of God.* From which words the Doctrine will plainly be; *That Monarchy or Kingly Government is most according to the Mind of God.* For it is not said, Seek the *Parliament* of God, the *Army* of God, or the *Committee of Safety* of God; but it is, Seek the *Kingdom of God.* And who could expect less? Immediately after this the *King* came in, and the *Bishops* were restored. Again Sir, because I would willingly be understood, Suppose you design to preach about *Election* and *Reprobation*: As for the eighth Chapter to the *Romans*, that's too too well known: But there's a little private place in the *Psalms* that will do the business as well, *Psal.* 90. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my Soul.* The Doctrine which naturally flows from the words, will be, *That amongst the multitude of thoughts, there is a great thought of Election and Re-*

probation.

probation. And then away with the point according as the Preacher is inclined. Or, suppose lastly, that you were not fully satisfied that *Pluralities* were lawful or convenient; May I be so bold, Sir, I pray what Text would you chuse to Preach upon against *Non-residents*? Certainly nothing ever was better pick'd then that of St. *Matth.* 1. 2. Abraham *begot* Isaac. A clear place against *Non-residents*: For had *Abraham* not resided, but discontinued from *Sarah* his Wife, he could never have begot *Isaac*.

But it is high time, Sir, to make an end of their Preaching, lest you be as much tired with the repetition of it, as the People were little benefited, when they heard it. I shall only mind you, Sir, of one thing more, and that is the ridiculous, senseless and unintended use, which many of them make of *Concordances*. I shall give you but one instance of it, although I could furnish you with an hundred printed ones. The Text, Sir, is this, *Galat.* 6. 15. *For in* Christ Jesus *neither Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision availeth any thing, but a new Creature*. Now all the World know the meaning of this to be, that let a Man be of what Nation he will, *Jew* or *Gentile*, if he

he amends his life, and walks according to the Gospel, he shall be accepted with God. But this is not the way that pleases them: They must bring in to the Sermon, to no purpose at all, a vast heap of places of Scripture (which the *Concordance* will furnish them with) where the word *new* is mentioned: And the Observation must be, That *God is for new things; God is for a new Creature.* St. John 19. 41. *Now in the place where he was Crucified, there was a Garden; and in the Garden a new Sepulcre, wherein was never Man yet laid; there laid they* Jesus: And again: St. *Mark* 16. 17. *Christ* tells his Disciples, That they that are true Believers, shall cast out Devils, and speak *with new Tongues*: And likewise the Prophet teaches us, *Isa.* 42. 10. *Sing unto the Lord* a new Song, *and his Praise unto the end of the Earth.* Whence it is plain, that *Christ* is not for *old things*; he is not for an *old Sepulchre*; he is not for *old Tongues*; he is not for an *old Song*; he is not for the *old Creature*; *Christ* is for the *new Creature*: *Circumcision and Uncircumcision availeth nothing, but the new Creature.* And what did we read concerning *Sampson*, *Judg.* 15. 15. Is it not, that he slew a thousand of the *Philistines*

sistines with one *new Jaw-bone*? An old one might have killed its tens, its twenties, its hundreds; but it must be a *new Jaw-bone* that's able to kill a thousand. God is for the *new Creature*.

But may not some say, is God altogether for new things? How comes it about then that the Prophet says, *Isa.* 1. 13, 14. *Bring no more vain Oblations, &c. your New-Moons and your appointed Feasts my Soul hateth*? And again, what means that, *Deut.* 32. 17, 19. *They sacrifice unto Devils, and to New-Gods, whom they knew not; to New-Gods, that came newly up: And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them*? To which I answer; that God indeed is not for *New-Moons*, nor for *New-Gods*; but, excepting *Moons* and *Gods*, he is for new things: God is for the *New-Creature*.

It is possible, Sir, that some-body, besides your self, may be so vain as to reade this Letter; and they may perhaps tell you, that there be no such silly and useless people as I have described; and if there be, there be not above two or three in a Country: or should there be more, it is no such complaining matter, seeing that the same happens in other Professions, in *Law* and *Physick*:

In both which there be many a contemptible Creature.

Such therefore as these may be pleased to know, that if there had been need, I could have told them either the *Book* and very *Page*, almost of all that has been spoken about Preaching; or else the *who* and *where*, and the *Person* that Preached it.

As to the second, *viz.* That the Clergy are all mightily furnished with Learning and Prudence, except ten, twenty or so; I shall not say any thing my self, because a very great *Scholar* of our Nation shall speak for me, who tells us, *That such Preaching as is usual, is a hindrance of Salvation, rather than the means to it.* And what he intends by *usual*, I shall not here go about to explain.

As to the last, I shall also in short answer: That if the advancement of true Religion, and the eternal Salvation of a Man, were no more considerable than the health of the Body, and the security of his Estate, we need not be more solicitous about the Learning and Prudence of the *Clergy*, than of the *Lawyers* and *Physicians*: But being we believe it to be otherwise, surely we ought to be more concern'd for the Reputation,

and ſucceſs, of the one than of the other.

I come now, Sir, to the ſecond Part, that was deſigned, *viz.* the *Poverty* of ſome of the Clergy: By whoſe mean condition, their ſacred Profeſſion is much diſparaged, and their Doctrine undervalued.

What large proviſions of old, God was pleaſed to make for the *Prieſthood*, and upon what reaſons, is eaſily ſeen to any one that looks but into the *Bible*. The *Levites*, it is true, were left out in the Diviſion of the Inheritance; not to their loſs, but to their great temporal advantage: for whereas, had they been common ſharers with the reſt, a twelfth part only would have been their juſt allowance, God was pleaſed to ſettle upon them a tenth; and that without any trouble or charge of Tillage: Which made their portion much more conſiderable than the reſt.

And as this proviſion was very bountiful, ſo the reaſons, no queſtion, were very divine and ſubſtantial: Which ſeem chiefly to be theſe two.

Firſt, that the *Prieſthood* might be altogether at leaſure for the Service of God, and that they of that Holy Order might

not

not be distracted with the cares of the World, and interrupted by every Neighbour's Horse or Cow, that breaks their hedges, or shackles their Corn: But, that living a kind of spiritual life; and being removed a little from all worldly affairs, they might alwayes be fit to receive holy Inspirations, and alwayes ready to search out the mind of God, and to advise and direct the People therein. Not, as if this divine exemption of them from the common troubles and cares of this life, was intended as an opportunity of Luxury and Lazineſs; for certainly there is a labour besides digging: And there is a true carefulneſs without following the Plough, and looking after their Cattel. And such was the Employment of those holy Men of old: their care and buſineſs was to please God, and to charge themselves with the welfare of all his People: Which thing he that does with a good and satisfied Conscience, I'll asure you, he has a task upon him, much beyond them that have for their care, their hundreds of Oxen and five hundreds of Sheep.

Another reason that this large allowance was made to the *Priests*, was, that they might be enabled to relieve the Poor, to

entertain Strangers, and thereby to encourage People in the wayes of Godlineſs: For they being in a peculiar manner the Servants of God, God was pleaſed to entruſt in their hands a portion more than ordinary of the good things of the Land, as the ſafeſt ſtore-houſe and treaſury for ſuch as were in need. That in all Ages therefore, there ſhould be a continued tollerable Maintenance for the Clergy; the ſame reaſons, as well as many others, make us think to be very neceſſary. Unleſs they'll count Money and Victuals to be only Types and Shadows, and ſo to ceaſe with the Ceremonial Law.

For where the *Miniſter* is pinch'd, as to the tollerable conveniences of this Life, the chief of his care and time muſt be ſpent not in an impertinent conſidering what Text of Scriptures will be moſt uſeful for his Pariſh, what Inſtructions moſt ſeaſonable, and what Authors beſt to be conſulted: But the chief of his thoughts, and his main buſineſs muſt be to ſtudy how to live that week: Where he ſhall have Bread for his Family? Whoſe Sow has lately Pigg'd? Whence will come the next rejoycing Gooſe, or the next cheerful Basket of Apples? How far to *Lammas*, or *Offerings*? When

ſhall we have another Chriſtening and Cakes, and who is likely to Marry or Die? Theſe are very ſeaſonable conſiderations, and worthy of a Mans thoughts. For a Family cannot be maintain'd by Texts and Contexts: And the Child that lies crying in the Cradle, will not be ſatisfied without a little Milk, and perhaps Sugar, though there be a ſmall *German Syſtem* in the houſe.

But ſuppoſe he does get into a little hole over the Oven, with a Lock to it, call'd his *Study*, towards the latter end of the week (for you muſt know, Sir, there is very few Texts of Scripture that can be divided, at ſooneſt, before *Friday* night; and ſome there be that will never be divided but upon *Sunday* morning, and that not very early, but either a little before they go, or in the going to Church:) I ſay, ſuppoſe the Gentleman gets thus into his Study: one may very near gheſs, what is his firſt thought when he comes there, *viz.* that the laſt Kilderkin of Drink is near departed; and that he has but one poor ſingle Groat in the houſe, and there's judgment and execution ready to come out againſt it, for Milk and Eggs. Now, Sir, can any Man think that one thus rack'd, and tortur'd, can

be seriously intent half an hour to contrive any thing that might be of real advantage to his People? Besides; perhaps that week he has met with some dismal crosses and most undoing misfortunes. There was a scurvy-condition'd Mole that broke into his Pasture, and plough'd up the best part of his Glebe: And a little after that, came a couple of spightful ill-favour'd Crows, and trampl'd down the little remaining Grass: Another day, having but four Chickens, sweep comes the Kite, and carries away the fattest and hopefullest of all the Brood. Then after all this came the Jack-daws, and Starlings (idle Birds that they are!) and they scatter-ed and carried away from his thin thatch'd house forty or fifty of the best straws: And to make him compleatly unhappy, after all these afflictions, another day, that he had a pair of Breeches on, coming over a perverse Stile, he suffered very much in carelessly lifting over his Leg. Now, what Parish can be so inconsiderate and unreasonable, as to look for any thing from one, whose phansie is thus check'd, and whose understanding is thus ruffl'd and disordered. They may as soon expect comfort and consolation from him that lies rack'd with the Gout and Stone,

Stone, as from a *Divine* thus broken and ſhatter'd in his fortunes.

But we'll grant, that he meets not with any of theſe ſuch frightful diſaſters, but that he goes into his Study with a Mind as calm as the Evening: For all that, upon *Sunday*, we muſt be content even with what God ſhall pleaſe to ſend us. For as for *Books*, he is (for want of Money) ſo moderately furniſh'd, that except it be a ſmall *Geneva-Bible*, ſo ſmall, as it will not be deſired to lie open of it ſelf, together with a certain *Concordance* thereunto belonging; as alſo a Book for all kind of *Latin* Sentences, called *Polyanthea*; with ſome Expoſition upon the *Catechiſm* (a portion of which is to be got by heart, and to be put off for his own;) and perhaps Mr. *Caryl* upon *Pineda*, Mr. *Dod* upon the Commandements, and Mr. *Clark's* Lives of famous Men, both in Church and State; ſuch as Mr. *Carter* of *Norwich*, that uſes to eat ſuch abundance of Pudden: Beſides, I ſay, theſe, there is ſcarce any thing to be found but a boudget of old ſtitch'd Sermons, hung up behind the door, with a few broken Girts, two or three yards of Whipcord, and perhaps a Saw and a Hammer, to prevent

dilapidations. Now, what may not a *Divine* do, though but of ordinary parts, and unhappy education, with such learned helps and assistances as these? No Vice surely durst stand before him, nor Heresie affront him.

And furthermore, Sir, it is to be considered, that he that is but thus meanly provided for, it is not his only infelicity that he has neither Time, Mind, nor Books, to improve himself for the inward benefit and satisfaction of his People, but also that he is not capable of doing that outward good amongst the needy, which is a great Ornament to that holy Profession, and a considerable advantage towards the having his Doctrine believed and practised in a degenerate World. And that which augments the misery, whether he be able or not, it is expected from him. If there comes a *Brief* to *Town*, for the *Minister* to cast in his Mite, will not satisfie, unless he can create six-pence or a shilling to put into the Box, for a stale to decoy in the rest of the Parish: Nay, he that has but twenty or thirty pounds *per annum*, if he bids not up as high as the best in the Parish in all acts of Charity, he is counted carnal, and earthly-minded,

minded, onely because he durst not coin, and cannot work Miracles. And let there come never so many Beggars, half of these I'll secure you, shall presently enquire for the Minister's House: For God, say they, certainly dwells there, and has laid up for us sufficient relief.

I know many of the *Laity* are usually so extreamly tender of the spiritual welfare of the Clergy, that they are apt to wish them but very small temporal Goods, lest their inward state should be in danger, (A thing they need not much fear, since that effectual humiliation of *Henry* the Eighth.) For, say they, the great Tithes, large Glebes, good Victuals and warm Cloathes, do but puff up the *Priest*, making him fat, soggy, and useless, and fill him with pride, vain-glory, and all kind of inward wickedness, and pernitious corruption. We see this plain, say they, in the *Whore of Babylon*: To what a degree of Luxury and Intemperance (besides a great deal of false Doctrine) have Riches and Honour raised up that *Strumpet*? How does she strut it, and swagger it over all the World, terrifying Princes, and despising Kings and Emperours? The Clergy, if ever we would expect any edifi-

cation

tation from them, ought to be dieted and kept low, to be meek and humble, quiet, and ſtand in need of a pot of Milk from their next Neighbour, and alwayes be very loth to ask for their very right, for fear of making any diſturbance in the Pariſh, or ſeeming to underſtand, or have any reſpect for this vile and outward World. Under the *Law*, indeed in thoſe old times of darkneſs and eating, the Prieſts had their firſt and ſecond diſhes, ther Milk and Honey, their Manna and Quails, their outward alſo and inward Veſtments: But now under the *Goſpel*, and in times of Light and Faſting, a much more ſparing Diet is fitter, and a ſingle Coat, though it be never ſo ancient and thin, is fully ſufficient. We muſt now look, ſay they, (if we would be the better for them) for a hardy and labouring Clergy, that is mortified to a Horſe, and all ſuch pampering vanities; and that can foot it five or ſix miles in the dirt, and Preach till ſtar-light for as many ſhillings; as alſo a ſober and temperate Clergy, that will not eat ſo much as the Laity, but that the leaſt Pig, and the leaſt Sheaf, and the leaſt of every thing, may ſatisfie their Spiritualſhip. And beſides, a

Money-

Money-renouncing Clergy, that can abſtain from ſeeing a penny a month together, unleſs it be when the *Collectors*, and *Viſitationers* come. Theſe are all Goſpel-Diſpenſations, and great inſtances of Patience, contentedneſs, and reſignation of affections; to all the emptineſſes and fooleries of this life.

But, cannot a Clergy-man chuſe rather to lie upon Feathers than an Hardle, but he muſt be idle, ſoft, and effeminate? May he not deſire wholeſom Food, and freſh Drink, unleſs he be a Cheat, a Hypocrite and an Impoſtor? And muſt he needs be void of all Grace, though he has a ſhilling in his Purſe after the Rates be croſs'd? And full of pride and vanity, though his houſe ſtands not upon crutches, and though his Chimney is to be ſeen a foot above the Thatch? Oh, how prettily and temperately may half a ſcore Children be maintained with almoſt Twenty pounds *per annum!* What a handſom ſhift a poor ingenious and frugal *Divine* will make, to take it by turns, and wear a Caſſock one year, and a pair of Breeches another? What a becoming thing is it, for him that ſerves at the Altar, to fill the Dung-Cart in dry weather, and to heat the

the Oven, and pill Hemp in wet? And what a pleasant sight is it, to see the Man of God fetching up his single Melancholy Cow, from a small rib of Land that is scarce to be found without a Guide? Or to be seated upon a soft and well grinded pouch of Meal? Or to be planted upon a Pannier with a pair of Geese, or Turkies, bobbing out their heads from under his Canonical Coat, as you cannot but remember the Man, Sir, that was thus accomplish'd? Or to find him raving about the Yards, or keeping his Chamber close, because the Duck lately miscarried of an Egg, or that the never-failing Hen has unhappily forsaken her wonted Nest?

And now, shall we think that such Employments as these can any way consist with due reverence, or tollerable respect from a Parish? And he speaks altogether at a venture, that either sayes that this is false, or at least it need not be so, notwithstanding the mean condition of some of the Clergy. For let any one make it out to me, which way it is possible, that a Man shall be able to maintain perhaps eight or ten in his Family, with twenty or thirty Pounds *per annum*, without a most intollerable dependance upon his

his Parish, and without committing himself to such vileness, as will in all likelihood render him contemptible to his People. Now, where the In-come is so pitifully small (which I'll assure you, is the portion of hundreds of the Clergy of this Nation) which way shall he manage it for the subsistance of himself, and his Family? If he keeps the Glebe in his own hand (which he may easily do, almost in the hollow of it) what encrease can he expect from a couple of Apple-Trees, a brood of Ducklings, a Hemp-Land, and as much Pasture as is just able to summer a Cow? And as for his Tithes, he either Rents them out to a Lay-man, who will be very unwilling to be his Tenant, unless he may be sure to save by the bargain at least a third part: Or else he compounds for them; and then as for his Money, he shall have it when all the rest of the World be paid. But if he thinks fit to take his Dues in kind, he then either demands his true and utmost Right; and if so, it is a great hazzard if he be not counted a Caterpiller, a Muck-worm, a very Earthly-minded Man, and too much sighted into this lower World; which was made, as many of the Laity think, altogether for themselves:

ſelves: Or elſe he muſt tamely commit himſelf to that little Doſe of the Creature, that ſhall be pleaſed to be proportioned out unto him: Chuſing rather to ſtarve in peace and quietneſs, than to gain his right by noiſe and diſturbance: The beſt of all theſe wayes that a Clergy-man ſhall think fit for his preferment to be manag'd, where it is ſo ſmall, are ſuch, as will undoubtedly make him either to be hated and reviled, or elſe pitifully poor and diſeſteemed.

But has it not gone very hard in all ages with the Men of God? Was not our *Lord* and *Maſter*, our Great and *High Prieſt*, and was not his fare low, and his life full of trouble? And was not the Condition of moſt of his *Diſciples* very mean? Were not they notably pinch'd, and ſeverely treated after him? And is it not the Duty of every Chriſtian to imitate ſuch holy Patterns: But eſpecially of the Clergy, who are to be ſhining Lights and viſible Examples, and therefore to be ſatisfied with a very little Morſel, and to renounce ten times as much of the World as other People? And is not Patience better than the great Tithes, and Contentedneſs to be preferred before large Fees and Cuſtoms? Is there any com-

pariſon

pariſon between the expectation of a cringing Bowe, or a low Hat, and mortification to all ſuch Vanities and Fopperies; eſpecially with thoſe who, in a peculiar manner, hope to receive their Inheritance, and make their Harveſt in the next Life? This was well thought of indeed: But for all that, if you pleaſe, Sir, we will conſider a little ſome of thoſe remarkable Inconveniences, that do moſt undoubtedly attend upon the Miniſters being ſo meanly provided for.

Firſt of all, the holy Men of God, or the Miniſtry in general, hereby is diſ-eſteemed, and rendred of ſmall account. For though they be called the *Men* of *God*, yet when it is obſerved, that God ſeems to take but little care of them in making them tollerable Proviſions for this Life, or that Men are ſuffered to take away that which God was pleaſed to provide for them, the People are preſently apt to think, that they belong to God no more then ordinary folks, if ſo much. And although it is not to be queſtion'd, but that the laying on of Hands is a moſt Divine Inſtitution; yet it is not all the *Biſhops* Hands in the World, laid upon a Man, if he be either notoriouſly ignorant, or diſmally poor, that can procure him

him any hearty and lasting respect. For though we find that some of the *Disciples* of *Christ*, that carried on and established the great Designs of the Gospel, where Persons of ordinary Employments and Education; yet we see little reason to think that Miracles should be continued to do that, which natural endeavours, assisted by the Spirit or God, are able to perform. And if *Christ* were still upon Earth to make Bread for such as are his peculiar Servants, and Declarers of his Mind and Doctrine, the Laity, if they please, should eat up all the Corn themselves, as well the tenth sheaf as the other; but seeing it is otherwise, and that that Miraculous Power was not left to the succeeding Clergy, for them to beg their Bread, or depend for their subsistance upon the good pleasure and humour of their Parish, is a thing that renders that holy Office very much slighted, and disregarded.

That constitution therefore of our Church was a most prudent design; that sayes, that all who are Ordain'd, shall be Ordain'd to somewhat; Not Ordain'd at random, to Preach in general to the whole World, as they travel up and down the Road, but to this

this of that particular Parish. And no question, the reason was to prevent Spiritual-Pedling, and gadding up and down the Country with a bag of trifling and insignificant Sermons; enquiring, who will buy any Doctrine? So that no more might be received into Holy Orders, than the Church had Provision for. But so very little is this regarded, that if a young *Divinity-intender* has but got a Sermon of his own, or of his Father's, although he knows not where to get a Meals Meat, or one penny of Money by his Preaching, yet he gets a Qualification from some Benefic'd-Man or other, who perhaps is no more able to keep a Curate, than I am to keep ten Foot-boys, and so he is made a Preacher. And upon this account I have known an ordinary Divine, whose Living would but just keep himself and his Family from Melancholly and Dispair, shroud under his protection as many *Curats*, as the best Nobleman in the Land has *Chaplains*. Now, many such as these go into Orders against the Sky falls; foreseeing no more likelihood of any Preferment coming to them, than you or I do of being Secretaries of State. Now, so often as any such as these, for want of Maintenance, are put

to any unworthy and disgraceful shifts, this reflects disparagement upon all that Order of Holy Men.

And we must have a great care of comparing our small-prefer'd Clergy with those but of the like fortune in the Church of *Rome*, they having many Arts and Devices of gaining Respect and Reverence to their Office, which we count neither just nor warrantable. We design no more than to be in a likely capacity of doing good, and not discrediting our Religion, nor suffering the Gospel to be dis-esteemed: But their aim is clearly, not onely by Cheats, contriv'd Tales, and feigned Miracles, to get Money in abundance; but to be worshipped, and almost deified, is as little as they will content themselves withal. For, how can it be, but that the People belonging to a Church, wherein the Supream Governour is believed never to erre, either purely by virtue of his own single Wisdom, or by the help of his Inspiring Chair, or by the assistance of his little Infallible Cardinals, (for it matters not where the root of not being mistaken lies) I say, how can it be, but that all that are Believers of such extraordinary knowledge, must needs stand

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in moſt direful awe, not only of the foreſaid Supreme, but of all that adhere to him, or are in any Ghoſtly Authority under him? And although it ſo happens, that this ſame extraordinary knowing *Perſon* is pleaſed to trouble himſelf with a good large proportion of this vile and contemptible World, ſo that ſhould he now and then, upon ſome odd and cloudy day, count himſelf Mortal, and be a little miſtaken; yet he has chanced to make ſuch a comfortable proviſion for himſelf and his Followers, that he muſt needs be ſufficiently valued and honoured amongſt all: But had he but juſt enough to keep himſelf from catching cold, and ſtarving, ſo long as he is inveſted with ſuch ſpiritual Soveraignty, and ſuch a peculiar priviledge of being Infallible, moſt certainly, without quarrelling, he takes the Rode of all Mankind.

And as for the moſt inferiour Paieſts of all, although they preteud not to ſuch perfection of knowledge, yet there be many extraordinary things, which they are believed to be able to do, which beget in People a moſt venerable reſpect towards them; ſuch is the power of Making God in the *Sacrament*; a thing that muſt infallibly

procure an infinite admiration of him that can do it, though he ſcarce knows the Ten Commandments, and has not a farthing to buy himſelf Bread. And then when *Chriſt* is made, their giving but half of him to the Laity, is a thing alſo, if it be minded, that will very much help on the buſineſs, and make the People ſtand at a greater diſtance from the Clergy. I might inſtance likewiſe in their Auricular Confeſſions, injoyning of Penance, forgiving Sins, making of *Saints*, freeing People from Purgatory, and many ſuch uſeful Tricks they have, and Wonders they can do, to draw in the forward believing *Laity* into a moſt Right-Worſhipful Opinion, and Honourable Eſteem of them. And therefore ſeeing our Holy Church of *England* counts it not juſt, nor warrantable thus to cheat the World, by belying the Scriptures, and by making uſe of ſuch falſhood and ſtrategems to gain reſpect and reverence: It behoves us certainly to wiſh for, and endeavour all ſuch means as are uſeful and lawful, for the obtaining the ſame.

I might here, I think, conveniently add, that though many Preferments amongſt the Clergy of *Rome* may poſſibly be as ſmall

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as some of ours in *England*, yet we are to be put in mind of one more excellent Contrivance of theirs, and that is the denyal of Marriage to Priests, whereby they are freed from the Expences of a Family, and a train of young Children, that, upon my word, will soon suck up the Milk of a Cow or two, and grind in pieces a few sheaves of Corn. The Church of *England* therefore thinking it not fit to oblige their Clergy to a single Life, and I suppose are not likely to alter their Opinion, unless they receive better reasons for it from *Rome*, then has been as yet sent over; he makes a comparison very wide from the purpose, that goes about to try the livings here in *England*, by those of the Church of *Rome*: There being nothing more frequent in our Church, than for a Clergy-man to have three or four Children to get Bread for, by that time one in theirs shall be allowed to go into Holy Orders.

There is still one thing remaining, which ought not to be forgotten (a thing that is sometimes urged, I know, by the Papists, for the single life of the Priests) that does much also lessen the Esteem of our Ministery; and that is the poor and contemptible

Employment that many Children of the Clergy are forced upon, by reaſon of the meanneſs of their Fathers Revenue. It has happen'd, I know ſometimes, that whereas it has pleaſed God to beſtow upon the Clergy-man a very ſufficient Incom; yet ſuch has bin his careleſneſs, as that he hath made but pitiful proviſions for his Children. And on the other ſide, notwithſtanding all the good care and thoughtfulneſs of the Father, it has happen'd at other times that the Children, beyond the power of all advice, have ſeemed to be reſolved for Debauchery; but to ſee Clergy-mens Children condemn'd to the Walking of Horſes, to wait upon a Tapſter, or the like, and that only becauſe their Father was not able to allow them a more gentile Education, are ſuch Employments that cannot but bring great diſgrace and diſhonour upon the Clergy.

But this is not all the inconvenience that attends the ſmall Income that is the Portion of ſome Clergy-men; for beſides that the Clergy in general is diſeſteemed, they are likely alſo to do but little good in their Pariſh. For it is a hard matter for the People to believe that he talks any thing to the purpoſe, that wants ordinary Food for his Family

mily, and that his Advice and Expoſition can come from above, that is ſcarce defended againſt the Weather. I have heard a travelling poor Man beg with very good Reaſon and a great ſtream of ſeaſonable Rhetorick, and yet it has been very little minded, becauſe his Cloaths were torn, or at leaſt out of faſhion: And on the other ſide, I have heard but an ordinary ſaying, proceeding from a fine Suit, and a good luſty Title of Honour, highly admired; which would not poſſibly have been hearken'd to, had it been uttered by a meaner perſon; yet by all means, becauſe it was a phanſie of his *Worſhips*, it muſt be counted high, and notably expreſſed. If indeed this World were made of ſincere and pure beaten Virtue, like the Gold of the firſt Age, then ſuch idle and fond prejudices would be a very vain ſuppoſal: And the Doctrine that proceeded from the moſt tattered and contemptible Habit, and the moſt ſparing Diet, would be as acceptable as that which flowed from a Silken Caſſock, and the beſt Chear: But ſeeing the World is not abſolutely perfect, it is to be queſtioned, whether he that runs upon Truſt for every Ounce of Proviſion he ſpends in his

Family, can ſcarce look from his Pulpit into any Seat of the Church, but that he ſpies ſome body or other that he is beholden to, and depends upon; and for want of money has ſcarce confidence to ſpeak handſomly to his *Sexton*; it is to be queſtion'd, I ſay, whether one thus deſtitute of all tolerable ſubſiſtance, and thus ſhattered and diſtracted with moſt neceſſary Cares, can either invent with diſcretion, or utter with courage any thing that may be beneficial to his People, whereby they may become his diligent attenders, and hearty reſpecters.

And as the People do almoſt reſolve againſt being amended, or bettered by that Miniſters Preaching, whoſe circumſtances, as to this life, are ſo bad, and his condition ſo low; ſo likewiſe is their Devotion very cool, and indifferent in hearing, from ſuch a one, the *Prayers* of the Church. The *Divine-Service*, all the World know, is the ſame, if read in the moſt magnificent *Cathedral*, or in the moſt private Parlour: Or, if performed by the *Arch-Biſhop* himſelf, or by the meaneſt of his Prieſts: But as the Solemnity of the place, beſides the Conſecration of it to God Almighty, do much influence upon the Devotion of the People:

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so also the quality and condition of the person that reads it. And although there be not that acknowledged difference between a Priest comfortably provided for, and him that is in the Thorns and Bryars, as there is between one placed in great Dignity and Authority, and one that is in less; yet such a difference the People will make, that they will scarce hearken to what is read by the one, and yet be most religiously attentive to the other. Not surely that any one can think, that he whose countenance is chearly, and his Barns full, can petition Heaven more effectually, or prevail with God for the forgiveness of a greater sin, than he who is pitifully pale, and is not owner of an Ear of Corn: yet most certainly they do not delight to confess their Sins, and sing Praises to God with him, who sighs more for want of Money and Victuals, than for his Trespasses and Offences. Thus it is, and will be, do you and I (Sir) what we can to the contrary: Did our Church indeed believe, with the *Papists*, every Person rightfully Ordained, to be a kind of God Almighty, working Miracles and doing Wonders; then would People most readily prostrate themselves to every thing in Holy Orders,

ders, though it could but just creep: But being our Church counts those of the Clergy to be but mortal Men (though peculiarly dedicated to God and his Service) their behaviour, their condition and circumstances of life will necessarily come into our value, and esteem of them. And therefore it is no purpose for Men to say, that this need not be; it being but meer prejudice, humour, and phansie: And that if the Man be but truely in Holy Orders, that's the great matter: And from thence come Blessings, Absolution, and Intercession through Christ with God: And that it is not *Philosophy*, *Languages*, *Ecclesiastical History*, *Prudence*, *Discretion*, and *Reputation*, by which the Minister can help us on towards Heaven: Notwithstanding this, I say again, that seeing Men are Men, and seeing that we are of the Church of *England*, and not of that of *Rome*, these things ought to be weighed and considered; and for want of being so, our Church of *England* has suffered much.

And I am almost confident, that since the Reformation, nothing has more hindred People from a just estimation of a Form of *Prayer*, and our *Holy Liturgie* than employing

employing a company of Boyes, or old illiterate Mumblers, to read the Service. And, I do verily believe, that at this very day, especially in *Cities* and *Corporations*, (which make up the third part of our Nation) there is nothing that does more keep back some dissatisfied People from Church, till *Service* be over, than that it is read by some Ten or Twelve-pound-Man, with whose Parts and Education they are so well acquainted, as to have reason to know, that he has but just skill enough to reade the *Lessons* with twice conning over. And though the Office of the Reader, be only to read word for word, and neither to invent or expound; yet People love he should be a Person of such worth and knowledge, as it may be supposed he understands what he reads. And although for some it were too burthensom a task to read the Service twice a day, and preach as often; yet certainly it were much better if the People had but one Sermon in a fortnight or month, so the Service was performed by a knowing and valuable Person, than to run an unlearned rout of contemptible People into Holy Orders, on purpose only to say the Prayers of the Church, who perhaps shall understand

ſtand very little more than a hollow pipe made of Tin or Wainſcot.

Neither do I here at all reflect upon *Cathedrals*: Where the Prayers are uſually read by ſome grave and worthy Perſon; And as for the unlearned Singers, whether Boys or Men, there is no more complaint to be made, as to this caſe, than that they have not an allunderſtanding *Organ*, or a prudent and diſcreet *Cornet*.

Neither need People be afraid that the Miniſter for want of Preaching ſhould grow ſtiff and ruſty, ſuppoſing he came not into the Pulpit every week: For he may ſpend his time very honeſtly, either by taking better care of what he Preaches, and by ſeriouſly conſidering what is moſt uſefull and ſeaſonable for the People; and not what Subject he can Preach upon with moſt eaſe, or upon what Text he can make a brave Speech, for which no body ſhall be better, or where he can beſt ſteal without being diſcover'd, as is the practice of many *Divines* in private Pariſhes: Or elſe he may ſpend it in viſiting the Sick, Inſtructing the Ignorant, and recovering ſuch as are gone aſtray: For, though there be Churches built for publick Aſſemblies, for publick Inſtruction, and

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Exhortation; and though there be not many abſolutely plain places of Scripture that do oblige the Miniſter to walk from houſe to houſe, yet certainly People might receive much more advantage from ſuch charitable Viſits and friendly Conferences, than from general Diſcourſes levell'd at the whole World; where perhaps the greateſt part of the time ſhall be ſpent in uſeleſs Prefaces, Dividings and Flouriſhings. Which thing is very practicable, excepting ſome vaſt Pariſhes: In which alſo it is much better to do good to ſome, than to none at all.

There is but one Calamity more that ſhall mention, which though it need not abſolutely, yet it does too frequently accompany the low condition of many of the Clergy: And that is, it is a great hazzard, if they be not *idle, intemperate* and *ſcandalous*. I ſay, I cannot prove it ſtrictly and undeniably, that a Man ſmally beneficed, muſt of neceſſity be diſſolute and debauched: But when we conſider, how much he lies ſubject to the humour of all kind of Reprobates, and how eaſily he is tempted from his own houſe of Poverty and Melancholly; it is to be feared, that he will be willing too often to forſake his own Study of a few ſcurvy Books,

Books, and his own Habitation of Darkneſs, where there is ſeldom eating or drinking, for a good lightſome one, where there is a bountiful proviſion of both. And when he comes here, though he ſwears not at all, yet he muſt be ſure to ſay nothing to them that does it, by all that they can think of: And though he judges it not fit to lead the Forelorn in Vice and Prophaneneſs; yet, if he goes about to damp a Frolick, there is great danger, not only of loſing his *Sunday* Dinner, but all opportunities of ſuch future refreſhments, for his niceneſs and ſqueamiſhneſs. And ſuch as are but at all diſpoſed to theſe lewd kind of Meetings, beſides the Devil, he ſhall have ſollicitors enough, who count all ſuch revelling occaſions very unſavory, and unhollow'd, unleſs they have the preſence of ſome Clergyman to ſanctifie the Ordinance: Who, if he ſticks at his Glaſs, bleſs him, and call him but *Doctor*, and it ſlides preſently. I take no delight, I muſt confeſs, to inſiſt upon this; but only I could very much wiſh that ſuch of our Governors, as go amongſt our ſmall preferr'd Clergy, to take a view of the Condition of the Church and Chancel, that they would make but enquiry whether

ther the Minister himself be not much out of repair.

I have now done, Sir, with the Grounds of that disesteem that many of the Clergy lie under, both by the *Ignorance* of some, and the extream *Poverty* of others: And I should have troubled you no farther, but that I thought it convenient not to omit the particular occasions that do concur to the making up of many of our Clergy so pittifully poor and contemptible.

The first thing that contributes much to the *Poverty* of the Clergy is the great *scarcity* of *Livings*: *Churches* and *Chappels* we have enough, it is to be confessed, if compared with the bigness of our *Nation*: But in respect of that infinite number that are in Holy Orders, it is a very plain case, that there is a very great want. And, I am confident that in a very little time I could procure hundreds, that should ride both Sun and Moon down, and be everlastingly yours, if you could help them but to a Living of Twenty five, or Thirty pounds a year: And this I suppose to be chiefly occasioned upon these two accounts; either from the *Eagerness* and Ambition that some People have of going into Orders; or from the

the *refuge* of others into the Church; who being otherwise disappointed of a Livelihood, hope to make sure of one by that means.

First, I say, that which encreases the unprovided-for number of the Clergy, is people posting into Orders, before they know their Message or Business, onely out of a certain kind of Pride and Ambition. Thus some are hugely in love with the meer Title of Priest, or Deacon; never considering how they shall live, or what good they are likely to do in their Office: But only they have a phansie that a Cassock, if it be made long, is a very handsom Garment, though it be never paid for: And that the Desk is clearly the best, and the Pulpit the highest Seat in all the Parish: That they shall take place of most but *Esquires* and *Right-Worshipfuls*: That they shall have the Honour of being Spiritual Guides and Counsellors: And they shall be supposed to understand more of the Mind of God than ordinary, though perhaps they scarce know the *old Law* from the *new*, nor the *Canon* from the *Apocrypha*. Many, I say, such as these there be, who know not where to get two groats, nor what they have to say to the People, but onely

because

becauſe they have heard that the Office of a Miniſter is the moſt Noble and Honourable Employment in the World, therefore they, not knowing in the leaſt what the meaning of that is, Orders by all means muſt have, though it be to the diſparagement of that Holy Function.

Others alſo there be, who are not ſo highly poſſeſs'd with the meer dignity of the Office, and honourableneſs of the Employment, but think, had they but a Licence and Authority to Preach, Oh how they could pay it away! And that they can tell the People ſuch ſtrange things, as they never heard before in all their lives: That they have got ſuch a commanding Voice, ſuch heart-breaking Expreſſions, ſuch a peculiar Method of Text-dividing, and ſuch notable Helps for the interpreting all difficulties in Scripture, that they can ſhew the People a much ſhorter way to Heaven, than has been as yet made known by any. Such a forwardneſs as this, of going into Holy Orders, either meerly out of an ambitious humour of being called a Prieſt, or of thinking they could do ſuch feats and wonders, if they might be but free of the Pulpit, has filled the Nation with many more Divines, than

there is any competent Maintenance for in the Church.

Another great crowd that is made in the Church, is by those, that take in there only as a place of *shelter* and *refuge*: Thus we have many turn Priests and Deacons, either for want of Employment in their Profession of *Law*, *Physick*, or the like; or having been unfortunate in their Trade, or having broken a Leg, or an Arm, and so disabled from following their former Calling; or, having had the pleasure of spending their Estate, or being (perhaps deservedly) disappointed of their Inheritance. The Church is a very large and good Sanctuary, and one Spiritual shilling is as good as three Temporality shillings: Let the hardest come to the hardest; if they can get by heart, *Quid est Fides? quid est Ecclesia? quot sunt Concilia Generalia?* and gain Orders, they may prove *Readers* or *Preachers* according as their Gifts and Opportunities shall lie. Now, many such as these, the Church being not able to provide for (as there is no great reason that She should be solicitous about it) must needs prove a very great disparagement to Her: They coming hither just as the old *Heathens* use to go to *Prayers*: When nothing

thing would stop the anger of the Godds, then for a touch of Devotion: And if there be no way to get Victuals, rather than starve let us *Read* or *Preach*.

In short, Sir, We are perfectly overstock'd with Professors of Divinity; There being scarce employment for half of those who undertake that Office. And unless we had some of the *Romish* tricks, to ramble up and down, and cry *Pardons* and *Indulgencies*: Or for want of a Living, have good store of Clients in the business of *Purgatory*, or the like, and so make such unrighteous Gains of Religion, it were certainly much better if many of them were otherwise determined. Or unless we had some vent for our Learned Ones beyond the Sea, and could transport so many Tunn of *Divines* yearly, as we do other Commodities with which the Nation is over stocked; we do certainly very unadvisedly to breed up so many to that Holy Calling, or to suffer so many to steal into Orders, seeing there is not sufficient Work and Employment for them.

The next thing that does much heighten the Misery of our Church, as to the Poverty of it, is the Gentries designing, not

onely the weak, the lame, and usually the most ill-favour'd of their Children for the Office of the Ministry, but also such as they intend to settle nothing upon for their subsistance, leaving them wholly to the bare hopes of Church-preferment. For, as they think, let the thing look how it will, it is good enough for the Church; and that if it had but limbs enough to climb the Pulpit, and eyes enough to find the day of the Month, it will serve well enough to Preach and Read Service. So likewise they think they have obliged the Clergy very much, if they please to bestow two or three years Education upon a younger Son at the *University*, and then commend him to the Grace of God, and the favour of the Church, without one Penny of Money or Inch of Land. You must not think, that he will spoyl his Eldest Son's Estate, or hazzard the lessening the Credit of the Family, to do that which may any way tend to the reputation and honour of the Clergy. And thus it comes to pass that you may commonly ride ten miles, and scarce meet with a *Divine* that is worth above two Spoons and a Pepper-box, besides his Living, or Spiritual Preferments. For, as for the Land,

that goes sweeping away with the Eldest Son for the immortality of the Family: and as for the Money, that is usually employed for to bind out, and Set up other Children. And thus you shall have them make no doubt of giving five hundred or a thousand pounds for a stock to them; But for the poor *Divinity-Son*, if he gets but enough to buy a broad Hat at second hand, and a small *System* or two of Faith, that's counted stock sufficient for him to set up withal. And possibly he might make some kind of shift in this World, if any Body will engage that he shall have neither Wife nor Children; but if so falls out, that he leaves the World, and behind him either the one or the others; in what a dismal condition are these likely to be, and how will their sad Calamities reflect upon the Clergy? So dismal a thing is this commonly judged, that those that at their departure out of this Life are pitifully and vertuously disposed, do usually reckon the taking care for the Relief of the poor *Ministers Widows*, to be an opportunity of as necessary Charity, as the mending the High-wayes, and the erecting of Hospitals.

But neither are Spiritual Preferments only

scarce by reason of that great number that lie hovering over them, and that they that are thus upon the wing, are usually delitcute of any other Estate and Livelihood; but also when they come into possession of them, they finding for the most part nothing but a little Sauce and second Course, Pigs, Geese, and Apples, must needs be put upon great perplexities for the standing necessaries of a Family. So that if it be enquired by any one, how comes it to passe that we have so many in Holy Orders, that understand so little, and that are able to do so little service in the Church? If we would answer plainly and truly, we may say, Because they are good for nothing else. For, shall we think that any man, that is not curs'd to uselesness, poverty and misery, will be content with Twenty or Thirty Pounds a Year? For though in the bulk it looks at first like a bountiful Estate; yet, if we think of it a little better, we shall find that an ordinary *Brick-layer*, or *Carpenter*, (I mean not your great Undertakers and Master Workmen) that earns constantly but his two shillings a day, has clearly a better Revenue, and has certainly the command of more Money: For that the one has no dila-

dilapidations, and the like, to consume a great part of his weekly Wages, which you know how much the other is subject unto. So that as long as we have so many small and contemptible Livings belonging to our Church (let the World do what it can) we must expect that they should be supplyed by very lamentable and unserviceable things: For that no body else will meddle with them: Unless one in an Age, abounding with Money, Charity and Goodness, will Preach for nothing. For if Men of Knowledge, Prudence, and Wealth, have a phansie against a Living of Twenty or Thirty Pounds a year: There is no way to get them into such an undertaking, but by sending out a Spiritual Press: For that very few Volunteers that are of worth (unless better encouraged) will go into that Holy Warfare: But it will be left to those who cannot devise how otherwise to live.

Neither must people say, that besides *Bishopricks*, *Prebendries*, and the like, we have several brave Benefices, sufficient to invite those of the best Parts, Education, and Discretion. For imagin one Living in forty is worth a Hundred Pounds a year; And supplyed by a Man of Skill, and

wholsome Counsel: What are the other thirty nine the better for that? What are the people about *Carlisle* better'd by his Instructions and advice who lives at *Dover*? It was certainly our *Saviour*'s Mind, not only that the Gospel should be Preached to all *Nations* at first, but that the meaning and Power of it should be preserved and constantly declared to all People, by such as had judgment to do it.

Neither again must they say, that *Cities*, *Corporations*, and the great *Trading Towns* of this Nation, (which are the strength and glory of it, and that contain the useful People of the World) are usually instructed by very learned and judicious Persons. For, I suppose, that our *Saviours* Design was not that *Mayors*, *Aldermen*, and *Merchants*, should be only saved; but also that all plain Countrey People should partake of the same means: Who, though they read not so many *Gazetts*, as a *Citizen*, nor concern themselves where the *Turk*, or *King of France* sets on next; yet the true knowledge of God is now so plainly delivered in Scripture, that there wants nothing but sober and prudent Offerers of the same, to make it saving to those of the meanest understandings.

dings. And therefore in all Parishes, if possible, there ought to be such a fixt and setled Provision, as might reasonably invite some careful and prudent Person, for the Peoples Guide and Instruction in Holy Matters.

And furthermore: It might be added, that the *Revenue* belonging to most of *Corporation-Livings* is no such mighty business: For were it not for the uncertain and humour-some contribution of the well-pleased Parishioners, the *Parson* and his Family might be easily starved, for all the *Lands* or Income that belongs to his Church. Besides the great mischief that such kind of hired Preachers have done in the World: Which I shall not stay here to insist upon.

And as we have not *Churches* enough, in respect of the great multitude that are qualified for a Living; so, considering the smalness of the Revenue, and the number of People that are to be the Hearers, it is very plain that we have too many. And we shall many times find two Churches in the same Yard, when as one would hold double the People of both the Parishes: And if they were united for the encouragement of some deserving Person, he might easily make

shift

shift to spend very honestly and temperately the Revenue of both. And what though Churches stand at a little further distance? People may please to walk a mile without distempering themselves; when as they shall go three or four to a Market to sell two pennies worth of Eggs.

But suppose they resolve to pretend, that they shall catch cold (the Clouds being more than ordinary thick upon the *Sunday*, as they usually are, if there be Religion in the case) and that they are absolutely bent upon having instruction brought to their own *Town*: Why might not one Sermon a day, or rather than fail one in a fortnight, from a prudent and well esteem'd-of Preacher, do as well as two a day from him, that talks all the year long nothing to the purpose, and thereupon is laugh'd at and despised?

I know what people will presently say to this, *viz.* That if upon *Sunday* the Church doors be shut, the *Ale-houses* will be open. And therefore there must be some body, though never so weak and lamentable, to pass away the time in the Church, that the people may be kept sober and peaceable. Truly, if Religion and the Worship of God consisted only in Negatives;

tives; and that the observation of the *Sabbath* was only not to be drunk; then they speak much to the purpose: but if it be otherwise, very little. It being not much unlike (as it is the fashion in many places) to the sending of little Children of two or three years old to a *School-Dame*, without any design of learning one Letter, but onely to keep them out of the fire and water.

Last of all, People must not say that there needs no great store of Learning in a Minister, and therefore a small Living may answer his deserts: For that there be *Homilies* made on purpose by the Church for young Beginners & slow Inventers, Whereupon it is that such difference is made between giving *Orders* and *Licence* to Preach; the last being granted onely to such as the Bishop shall judge able to make Sermons.

But this does not seem to do the business; For, though it be not necessary for every Guide of a Parish to understand all the *Oriental Languages*, or to make exactly elegant or profound Discourses for the Pulpit; yet most certainly it is very requisite that he should be so far learned and judicious, as prudently to advise, direct, inform, and satisfie the People in holy matters, when they

they demand it, or beg it from him. Which, to perform readily and judiciously, requires much more discretion and skill, than upon long deliberation, to make a continued talk of an hour, without any great discernable failings. So that were a Minister tyed up never to speak one sentence of his own invention out of the Pulpit in his whole Lifetime, yet doubtless many other occations there be, for which neither Wisdom nor Reputation should be wanting in him that has the Care and Government of a Parish.

I shall not here go about to please my self with the imagination of all the great *Tithes*, being restored to the Church, having little reason to hope to see such dayes of vertue. Nor shall I here question the almightiness of former *Kings* and *Parliaments*; nor dispute whether all the *King Henries* in the World, with never such a powerful *Parliament*, were able to determine to any other use what was once solemnly dedicated to God and his Service. But yet when we look over the Prefaces to those *Acts of Parliament*, whereby some Church-Revenues were granted to *Henry* the eight, one cannot but be much taken with the ingenuity

nuity of that *Parliament*? That when the *King* wanted a supply of Money, and an Augmentation to his Revenue, how handsomely out of the *Church* they made provision for him, without doing themselves any injury at all: *For*, say they, *seeing His Majesty is Our joy and life, seeing that He is so courageous and wise, seeing that He is so very tender of, and well-affected to all His Subjects; and He that has been at such large Expences for five and twenty whole years to defend and protect this his Realm; therefore in all Duty and Gratitude, and as a manifest token of Our unfeigned Thankfulneß, We do grant unto the King, and his Heirs for ever, &c.* It follows as closely as can be, That because the *King* had been a good and deserving King, and had been at much trouble and expence for the safety and honour of the Nation, that therefore all his wants shall be supplyed out of the Church: As if all the Charges that he had been at, was upon the account onely of his *Ecclesiastical Subjects*, and not in relation to the rest.

It is not, Sir, for you and I to guess which way the whole Clergy in general might be better provided for. But sure it is, and must

not

not be denied, that so long as many Livings continue as they now are, thus impoverished; and that there be so few encouragements for Men of Sobriety, Wisdom, and Learning, we have no reason to expect much better Instructors and Governours of Parishes, than at present we commonly find.

There is a way, I know, that some people love marvellously to talk of, and that is, a just and equal levelling of *Ecclesiastical* Preferments. What a delicate refreshment, say they, would it be, if Twenty or Thirty thousand pounds a year were taken from the *Bishops*, and discreetly sprinkled amongst the poorer and meaner sort of the Clergy? how would it rejoyce their hearts, and encourage them in their Office? What need those great and sumptuous Palaces, their City and their Country-houses, their Parks and spatious Waters, their costly Dishes and fashionable Sauces? May not he that lives in a small thatch'd House, that can scarce walk four strides in his own ground, that has only read well concerning *Venison*, *Fish*, and *Fowl*; may not he, I say, preach as loud, and to as much purpose, as one of those high and mighty *Spiritualists*? Go to then, seeing it hath pleased God to make

such

ſuch a bountiful Proviſion for his Church in general, what need we be ſollicitous about the amending the low condition of many of the Clergy, when as there is ſuch a plain remedy at hand, had we but grace to apply it? This Invention pleaſes ſome mainly well: But for all the great care they pretend to have of the diſtreſſed part of the Clergy, I am confident, one might eaſily gueſs what would pleaſe them much better; If inſtead of augmenting ſmall Benefices, the *Biſhops* would be pleaſed to return to them thoſe *Lands* that they purchaſed in their abſence. And then as for the relieving of the Clergy, they would try if they could find out another way.

But art thou in good earneſt my excellent Contriver? Doſt thou think that if the greateſt of our Church-Preferments were wiſely parcell'd out amongſt thoſe that are in want, it would do much feats and courteſies? And doſt thou not likewiſe think, that if ten or twenty of the luſtieſt *Noble-mens* Eſtates of *England* were cleaverly ſliced among the Indigent, would it not ſtrangely refreſh ſome of the poor *Laity*, that cry Small-Coal or grind Sciſſars? I do ſuppoſe that if God ſhould afterwards incline thy mind (for

I phanſie it will not be as yet a good while to be a *Benefactor* to the Church; thy wiſdom may poſſibly direct thee to diſperſe thy goodneſs in ſmaller parcels, rather than to flow in upon two or three with full happineſs. But if it be my inclination to ſettle upon one *Eccleſiaſtical* perſon, and his ſucceſſors for ever, a thouſand pounds a year; upon condition only to read *the Service of the Church* once in a week; and you take it ill, and find fault with my Prudence, and the method of my Munificence; and ſay, that the ſtipend is much too large for ſuch a ſmall task: Yet, I am confident, that ſhould I make thy *Laityſhip* Heir of ſuch an Eſtate, and oblige thee only to the trouble and expence of ſpending a ſingle Chicken, or half a dozen of Larks, once a year, in commemoration of me, that thou wouldſt count me the wiſeſt Man that ever was ſince the Creation; And pray to God, never to diſpoſe thy mind to part with one farthing of it, for any other uſe than for the ſervice of thy ſelf and thy Family. And yet, ſo it is, that becauſe the Biſhops, upon their firſt being reſtored, had the confidence to levy Fines according as they were juſtly due, and deſired to live in their own Houſes (if not

pull'd

pull'd down) and to receive their own Rents: Prefently they cry out the *Thieves* have got all the Treasure, and Money of the Nation into their hands. If they have any, let them thank God for it, and make good use of it. Weep not, Beloved, for there is very little hopes, that they will caft it all into the Sea, on purpose to stop the mouths of them, that say they have too much.

What other contrivances there may be for the settling upon Ministers in general a sufficient Revenue for their subsistence, and encouragement in their Office, I shall leave to be considered of by the *Governours* of Learning and Religion. Only, thus much is certain, that so long as the Maintenance of many *Ministers* is so very small, it is not to be avoided, but that a great part of them will want learning, prudence, courage, and esteem to do any good where they live. And what if we have (as by all must be acknowledged) as wise, and learned Bishops, as be in the World, and many others of very great understanding, and wisdom, yet (as was before hinted) unless there be provided for most Towns and Parishes, some tollerable and sufficient Guides,

the ſtrength of Religion, and the Credit of the Clergy will daily languiſh more and more. Not that it is to be believed, that every ſmall Country Pariſh ſhould be altogether hopeleſs as to the next Life, unleſs they have a *Hooker*, a *Chillingworth*, a *Hammond*, or a *Sanderſon*, dwelling amongſt them; but requiſite it is, and might be brought about, that ſome body there ſhould be, to whom the People have reaſon to attend, and to be directed, and guided by him.

I have, Sir, no more to ſay, were it not that you find the word *Religion* in the Title, of which in particular I have ſpoken very little: Neither need I, conſidering how nearly it depends, as to its glory and ſtrength, upon the reputation and mouth of the *Prieſt*. And I ſhall add no more but this, *viz.* that among thoſe many things that tend to the decay of Religion, and of a due Reverence of the *Holy Scriptures*, nothing has more occaſion'd it, than the ridiculous, and idle diſcourſes that are uttered out of Pulpits. For when the *Gallants* of the World do obſerve, how the *Miniſters* themſelves do jingle, quibble, and play the fools with their *Texts*, no wonder if they,

who

who are so inclinable to Atheism, do not only deride and despise the *Priests*, but droll upon the Bible, and make a mock of all that is sober and sacred. I am,

Sir,

August 8. 1679. Your most humble Servant,

T. B.

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